

**THE ANC's FIRST ARMED MILITARY OPERATION:  
The Luthuli Detachment and the Wankie campaign,  
July - September 1967**

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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MA in the Department of History, University of the Western Cape**

## KEY WORDS

ANC-MK

ZAPU-ZPRA

LUTHULI DETACHMENT

WANKIE CAMPAIGN

RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES

CHIMURENGA WAR

BASIL FEBRUARY

JAMES APRIL

OPERATION NICKEL

OPERATION CHINAMAN



## ABSTRACT

This mini-thesis tells the story of the African National Congress' (ANC's) first armed military operation and its Luthuli Detachment. The latter joined forces with the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) and crossed the Zambezi River on 31 July 1967 into Rhodesia. Their mission was twofold: the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) would embark on a long march home to South Africa, whilst some MK members would assist ZAPU's military wing, ZPRA to establish a guerrilla base at Lupane in north-east Rhodesia. The planners of the march intended to avoid contact with the Rhodesian security forces. This was not to be. A number of skirmishes between the two opposing forces lasted from 13 August to 4 September 1967. The Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith invited his South African counterpart John Vorster to send South African security reinforcements to Rhodesia to counter the guerrilla forces.

In the course of the mini-thesis the historical context of the Luthuli Detachment and the ZAPU guerrillas is traced. Why was their story so unique? It was the first time since the 19<sup>th</sup> century that armed clashes took place between the White rulers and the Black people of the region. The Luthuli Detachment was the first unit of the ANC to undertake an armed military operation and were pioneers in trying to carve a geographical route back into South Africa after the severe repression of the Nationalist Party government in the 1960s.

The long march through the Rhodesian bush and details of the battles, which ensued between the opposing forces is recorded. The first skirmish took place on 13 August 1967 and was called the Battle of Nyatuwe. The Rhodesian security forces called their action against the guerrillas Operation NICKEL. Their South African counterparts called their action Operation CHINAMAN, whilst the South African Airforce's specific assistance was called Operation SUPERCHARGE.

The media coverage of the Wankie campaign is briefly examined. More importantly, the Luthuli Detachment's place in popular history and memory is discussed with specific

reference to the Western Cape and the first two armed Coloured MK soldiers, James April and Basil February. The latter fell during the Wankie campaign.

This mini-thesis uses a range of secondary and primary sources to reconstruct what happened between the ANC-ZAPU forces and the Rhodesian-South African security forces. These include accounts by members of the Luthuli Detachment like Chris Hani, Graham Morodi, Norman Duka and James April. The primary sources include archival documents of the South Africa and Rhodesian security forces. The trial record of James April, is also used.

By the middle of September 1967, some of the guerrillas were killed, some were imprisoned by the Rhodesian or Botswana authorities and some found refuge in Zambia or Swaziland. Only one guerrilla managed to travel to South Africa but was later arrested and become an *Askari* by working for the South African Security Police. This mini-thesis traces the story of the Luthuli Detachment and their attempted march home to South Africa.


## DECLARATION

I declare that THE ANC's FIRST ARMED MILITARY OPERATION:

The Luthuli Detachment and the Wankie campaign, July - September 1967 is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Nicole (Nicky) Martina Van Driel

Date: June 2003

Signed.....

## DEDICATION

*For my daughters Taheera and Susan that they may know their history,  
and for their father James April, a member of the Luthuli Detachment*

**In memory of Basil February, James Masemeni and the other members of the  
Luthuli Detachment who fell during the Wankie campaign, and whose bravery so  
inspired our struggle for freedom.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This mini-thesis was researched over a number of years as I came to collect written and oral sources over a period of time. I initially commenced with research on political prisoners and first interviewed James April in 1986. The more I learnt about Basil February and the Luthuli Detachment, the more I felt the need to tell their story.

However, I was unable to avoid many time delays like the two-year waiting period whilst Military Intelligence cleared the archival files of the South African National Defence (SANDF), which I utilised. I spent more time obtaining oral interviews, collecting newspaper articles dating back to 1967 and 1971 and acquiring a copy of the trial record of James April, from the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court in Kwazulu-Natal. Even collecting secondary sources took time.

In 1990 I did an Honours History essay on James April (and to a lesser extent Basil February), entitled: *The journey to Wankie: The story of a 'Coloured' MK soldier.*

In 1997, to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Basil February's death, I published an article in the *Cape Argus*, *Basil February: the MK soldier who never made it home.* I collected so many different sources that I could not use all of it in this body of work. In all, writing this mini-thesis became a long and arduous process and was in every sense a labour of love.

I need to thank a number of people who assisted me over many years in one form or another. I express my appreciation to James April for being a source of inspiration in many ways. His endless patience in answering my questions about the events around the Wankie campaign and for his financial support during the period of the research is greatly appreciated. I thank him in particular for sharing the memories of his late close friend and comrade, Basil February with me and for his constructive criticism.

My supervisor, Dr David Scher believed in me and encouraged me to complete the project. I express my eternal gratitude to him.

A thank you to all those who gave of their time for interviews: Terence February, Dr Pallo Jordan, Marcus Solomon, Trevor Oosterwyk and Mrs Van Der Heyden. To the staff at the SANDF Archives, especially Steve de Agrela and Annette van Jaarsveldt who assisted in ensuring that the relevant files were made available to me, I express my endless gratitude.

To Ralph Williams, a member of the University of the Western Cape library staff who went beyond the call of duty to assist me - a big thank you to him.

To my family: my parents, my brothers and sisters who gave of their time generously, especially Felicia and Esther who assisted with the research and my daughters who sacrificed of our time together so that I could write this mini-thesis - I thank you.

This mini-thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of funding I received from DAAD and the National Research Foundation as well my employer, Government Communications (GCIS).

I am however, solely responsible for the mini-thesis that follows.

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This mini-thesis focuses on the story of the Luthuli Detachment<sup>1</sup>, an African National Congress (ANC) military unit, who on 31 July 1967 crossed the Zambezi River from the Zambian banks into Rhodesia, on a long march home to South Africa.

This South African ANC detachment was part of a joint operation with the Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) and their combined military operation became popularly known as the Wankie campaign.<sup>2</sup>

The plan that underpinned the Wankie campaign was quite simple. A joint ANC and ZAPU unit, which together consisted of approximately 80 guerrillas,<sup>3</sup> would cross the Zambezi River into Rhodesia. They would later break into two groups, with one group marching onto South Africa and the other group remaining in Rhodesia. The South African-bound group would consist mainly of a column of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) members, that is, the guerrillas from the military wing of the ANC. Their mission was to march through Rhodesia into South Africa where each combatant had specific instructions to assist in the political mobilisation of people in the different regions of the country. These regions included places like Cape Town, Durban, Umtata, Transkei, Johannesburg, the Northern Transvaal, Zeerust, Port Elizabeth and Stutterheim.<sup>4</sup> The Lupane-bound group would be a combined ZPRA<sup>5</sup> (name for the military wing of ZAPU) and a smaller MK force whose mission it was to set up a guerrilla base in the north-east of Rhodesia.

This joint overall operation was meant to give added military impetus to both the ANC's and ZAPU's broad strategies for liberation respectively. For the ANC this

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<sup>1</sup>This unit was named in honour of Chief Albert Luthuli, President-General of the ANC who died just prior to the detachment's departure for South Africa. As far as possible I constructed a list of all the members of the Luthuli Detachment with the assistance of James April and Edwin Dlamini who were both members of the unit. See Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> This campaign was most probably modelled on the Cuban campaign of 1959. See K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.12

<sup>3</sup> I use the term guerrilla, even where sources use terrorist or infiltrator, except with the newspaper clippings.

<sup>4</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71, 10 -15 May 1971, p.119 This is according to evidence given by state witness and Luthuli Detachment member Morris Mandela

<sup>5</sup> Also spelt ZIPRA sometimes

would achieve the immediate goal of resuscitating the internal struggle by placing trained ANC guerrillas back on South African soil. In the medium-term, the base the ANC would set up with ZAPU at Lupane would signal a future 'Ho-chi Minh route' to South Africa.<sup>6</sup> It was envisaged that the creation of this guerrilla base would in future make it easier for the ANC to send trained guerrillas through Rhodesia into South Africa. For ZAPU this would mean a new beginning in the political mobilisation of the African people in Rhodesia, and was in keeping with their guerrilla warfare strategy. Meli argues that the joint campaign between the ANC and ZAPU was also the identifying of common interests and aspirations of all those fighting colonialism and imperialism in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

The planners of the campaign wanted to avoid unnecessary armed clashes with the Rhodesian security forces. From the very outset therefore, the idea was to march along the western outskirts of the Wankie Game Reserve thereby avoiding contact with civilians, and most importantly confrontation with the Rhodesian security forces. However this was not to be.

Although initially unknown to the Rhodesian authorities,<sup>8</sup> the presence of the guerrillas was later detected and a number of armed clashes took place. The Rhodesians called their military campaign against the ANC-ZAPU unit, Operation NICKEL.<sup>9</sup> During the course of the ensuing battles both sides claimed victories. Within several weeks of having crossed the Zambezi River some of the guerrillas were killed or captured by the Rhodesian and Botswana security forces, whilst some would willingly surrender to the Botswana security forces. A few guerrillas found refuge in Zambia or in Swaziland and at least one MK guerrilla managed to reach Durban, South Africa but would later become an askari.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.2

<sup>7</sup> F. Meli, A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988) p.162. He also says that the ANC-ZAPU alliance was internationalism later known as African unity in action.

<sup>8</sup> Some reports claimed that the Rhodesian Intelligence was aware of the imminent crossing.

See R.Shay and C. Vermaak, The silent war (Rhodesia, Galaxie Press, 1971) pp.50-51

<sup>9</sup> See *Rhodesian Debriefs BGG 210/3/11/2 Vol.1*. Appendix 2

<sup>10</sup> This was Leonard Nkosi, he was the chief of staff of the Luthuli Detachment. Askari is a turncoat. Nkosi became an askari by working for and with the South African Police.

The skirmishes between the two opposing forces lasted from 13 August to 4 September 1967.<sup>11</sup> The reported engagements were as follows:

- The Zambezi valley (west of Kariba)
- The Wankie game reserve
- The Hartley/Gatooma area
- The Tjolutjo area<sup>12</sup>

The South African authorities responded by sending paramilitary troops to assist and support the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith with the advancing guerrilla forces. The South African Airforce assistance was called Operation SUPERCHARGE and commenced in August 1967. South Africa's military assistance was given the name Operation CHINAMAN and commenced on 1 September 1967. This was most probably because earlier reports had spoken of two Chinese men and one Chinese woman leading a group of guerrillas, although it was not confirmed at that stage.<sup>13</sup> By the time South Africa entered the fray the skirmishes between the two opposing sides were almost over. Once it became known that South African Police units were operating on Rhodesian soil, 'a storm of criticism burst', which involved both the British and Zambian governments.<sup>14</sup>

The Rhodesian authorities closed Operation NICKEL on 8 September 1967, as they were satisfied that all the guerrillas inside Rhodesia had been accounted for.<sup>15</sup>

The South African units remained in Rhodesia in readiness for any future guerrilla strike.

The discussion on the Luthuli Detachment and the Wankie campaign is an emotive one and prompts many hitherto unanswered questions. What actually happened between the ANC-ZAPU forces and the Rhodesian-South African security forces?

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<sup>11</sup> From a debriefing session held on Operation NICKEL at Brady Barracks on 26 September 1967. See *Rhodesia Debriefs BGG 210/3/11/2 Vol.1*. p.2, Appendix 2

<sup>12</sup> See K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) pp. 70-71

This does not include the incident with Basil February, which occurred near Figtree.

<sup>13</sup> Situation Report (SITREP) serial number (s.n.) 14, See Appendix 3

<sup>14</sup> M.Morris, *South African Terrorism* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.42

<sup>15</sup> *Rhodesia Debriefs BGG 210/3/11/2 Vol.1*. Situation Report s.n.37, See Appendix 3

Is the history of the Luthuli Detachment and its combatants indeed one of courage in the face of tremendous odds? How unique is their story in the history of the South African freedom struggle?

## 2. EXISTING LITERATURE

The existing accounts of the Wankie campaign tend to be fragmented and disparate. There is no complete and comprehensive written account of the events that unfolded in Rhodesia. Previous writers undertook their research within some form of limitation or other and were unable to access a wide range of sources. Both the South African and Rhodesian governments to some extent succeeded in blacking out information on the fighting in the Wankie Game Reserve area.

The non-availability of primary sources tended to limit and constrain the scope of these previous studies. For example, Barrell in his study on MK uses the statistics released by the South African Police Force (SAPF) for public consumption. Although he believes that they closely accord with independent figures, he concedes that the book he has written remains only a sketch, due to a lack of sources.<sup>16</sup> At the time Lodge wrote *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, he argued that research within South Africa on the ANC and particularly the ANC in exile was thinly documented within the country.<sup>17</sup>

Molapo argues that any researcher of ANC history is immediately confronted by the silence, which was imposed by the Apartheid government on the activities of a banned organisation. Civil society was prohibited from accessing ANC publications through a number of repressive measures. He summed this up by saying:

It is important to note that it is not easy to write a history of a movement (MK) that was illegal and operating underground for almost three decades.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> H. Barrell, *MK: the ANC's armed struggle* (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.1

<sup>17</sup> Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986 p.296

<sup>18</sup> R. Molapo, *'If you get a l-i-t-t-l-e leg of a dove you are satisfied!'* *Oral testimonies and the politics of armed conflict in South Africa 1961-1988*. (Paper presented to the MK conference 1 December 1995, Mayibuye Centre, University of the Western Cape) p.3

One of the more detailed books, which covers the subject of the Wankie campaign is, The fight for Zimbabwe: the armed conflict in Southern Rhodesia since UDI by Kees Maxey. The latter briefly examines the ideological differences between ZAPU and ZANU and explains the political developments in Rhodesia particularly around the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), which caused the Zimbabwean nationalist movement to rethink its guerrilla warfare strategy. More than any other writer Maxey focuses on firstly: the military nature of the war in Rhodesia, the identity of the ZAPU guerrillas and their training; secondly, the battles that ensued in August and September 1967 between the ANC-ZAPU and the Rhodesian-South African security forces. Maxey obtained the bulk of the information for his book from the Rhodesian Ministry of Information. He also utilised newspaper clippings from *The Rhodesia Herald* and *Bulawayo Chronicle* of 1966, 1967 and 1968.

At the time Maxey produced his book there was no reliable detailed study on the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. His book is based on articles written for the *Anti-Apartheid News* and ‘...was [meant] to counter the view propounded by the Rhodesian propaganda machine that was generally accepted as valid’.<sup>19</sup> He wrote this book mindful of Amilcar Cabral’s words: ‘Tell no lies - claim no easy victories’.<sup>20</sup>

One of the major weapons that the Rhodesian government [and the South African government] had was its control of the news media.<sup>21</sup> It was important to the Rhodesian authorities that all appear quiet and under control.<sup>22</sup> Reports of armed clashes and subsequent trials were kept to a minimum. Maxey quotes the preliminary to a trial report in the *Rhodesia Herald* (30.9.71) and the restrictions that were placed on the media as follows:

The name, address or any other information likely to reveal the identity of any person concerned or mentioned in the proceedings, should not be published.

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<sup>19</sup> London, Rex Collings, 1975, p.1

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.2

<sup>21</sup> For example, Judge Kennedy told the media not to identify Leonard Nkosi, a state witness in James April’s trial. Instead Kennedy said “...refer to him as Mr X or Mr Y or whatever you wish to call him”. *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10-15 May 1971, p.75

<sup>22</sup> See K. Maxey, The fight for Zimbabwe (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.3

No name of any political party or organisation mentioned in the proceeding should be published.  
No place, country or town mentioned in the proceedings should be named.  
Except for the Press and officials of the Court and other people whose presence was necessary, the proceedings should be held in camera.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, only European reporters were allowed to these trials for fear that information may spread by word of mouth to Africans.<sup>24</sup>

Whilst Maxey attempted as far as possible to reconstruct the war in Rhodesia he was conscious that his book was based primarily on White<sup>25</sup> Rhodesian sources and that the White Rhodesian press constantly underestimated the effectiveness of the Zimbabwean nationalists efforts.<sup>26</sup> He was aware that he was attempting to put together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle although ‘three-quarters of the pieces are missing’. He therefore noted that there could be ‘gaps, errors and incorrect deductions’.<sup>27</sup> This book is a fairly detailed and useful account of the Wankie campaign, which I drew on extensively.

Other secondary works consulted in this study include Vladimir Shubin’s, ANC: A view from Moscow, Tom Lodge’s, Black politics in South Africa since 1945, Howard Barrell’s, MK: the ANC’s armed struggle, Francis Meli’s, A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us, Martin and Johnson’s, The struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga war, Michael Morris’, South African terrorism and Al J. Venter’s, The Zambezi Salient: Conflict in Southern Africa. I also utilised accounts of the Wankie campaign by five of the Luthuli Detachment members, four of which were published. The works used are, “The Wankie Campaign”, by Chris Hani, “Heroes of our revolution” and “The Battle of Nyatuwe” by Comrade Rodgers an interview with Graham Morodi in The Rift: the exile experience by Hilda Bernstein and From shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka by B.C. Richmond. For the fifth account, I utilised my unpublished History Honours essay entitled, *The journey to Wankie: the story of a ‘Coloured’ MK soldier, James April*.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.4

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> I do not use inverted commas for colour denotation in the mini-thesis.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p.1

<sup>28</sup> N Van Driel, 1990, Honours (History), University of the Western Cape

### 3. THE ARGUMENT OF THIS MINI-THESIS

The Wankie campaign signified the beginning of the ANC's armed struggle. Since the inception of MK in December 1961 up until 1963 the ANC had only engaged in acts of sabotage. On 31 July 1967, the ANC for the first time launched an operation with the possibility of militarily engaging the White ruling class in Southern Africa.

By writing this mini-thesis I *inter alia* demonstrate that the members of the Luthuli Detachment were volunteers who participated in the Wankie campaign, because of their commitment to the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

Its members made their own history and were masters of their own destiny, albeit under circumstances they themselves did not choose. This is contrary to Lodge's argument about the Rhodesian incursions, including the Wankie campaign. He said they were most probably a ploy by the ANC leadership '...intended to remedy the sagging morale created by inactivity and boredom in the camps as well as boosting the ANC's position with the Liberation Committee of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU).'<sup>29</sup>

On a conceptual level one needs to emphasise that guerrillas are not equivalent to the military personnel of a conventional army. The latter has a specific role to play in the defence of a country, whereas the guerrillas of a political movement are inspired by a particular belief to take up arms. The story of the Luthuli Detachment thus needs to be understood in the context of guerrilla warfare which Maxey defined as an '...internal political battle fought on a violent front because the peaceful avenues present in a democratic society, have been closed'.<sup>30</sup> In this instance the Luthuli Detachment wished to overthrow Apartheid. They and their ZAPU counterparts were subject to the political discipline of their respective parties and acted on the instructions of the party's high command.

This mini-thesis illustrates that the story of the Luthuli Detachment is indeed one of tremendous courage and that it has a unique place in the history of South Africa.

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<sup>29</sup> T. Lodge, Black politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) pp. 299-300

<sup>30</sup> K. Maxey, The fight for Zimbabwe (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.3

Firstly, the Luthuli Detachment guerrillas were pioneers in attempting to carve a geographical route of infiltration into South Africa after the relentless repression of the Nationalist Party (NP) government in the 1960s. Secondly, it was the first time since the 19<sup>th</sup> century that armed clashes took place between the White rulers and the black people of the region.<sup>31</sup> The ANC guerrillas inflicted losses and casualties on the enemy and saw the White soldiers running in panic. This was of great psychological and political importance.<sup>32</sup>

This study focuses on the period July to September 1967 and attempts to answer the question, what really happened between the ANC-ZAPU and the Rhodesian-South African security forces during this time? Emphasis shall be given to the military aspects of the opposing forces. Did the ANC-ZAPU forces deserve the criticism or the praise they received? How did the joint Rhodesian-South African security forces fare in the face of the insurgents?

In the course of this study, I briefly examine the media coverage of the Wankie campaign and the place of the Luthuli Detachment in popular history and memory, with specific reference to the first armed Coloured MK soldiers, namely James April and Basil February who was the first Coloured MK soldier to fall.

An initial impression may be that the Wankie campaign failed in its objectives. Some criticised the campaign including the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), who called it 'an adventure' and perceived the operation as foolhardy amongst other things.<sup>33</sup> Dale T McKinley, criticised the campaign calling it, 'An ill-conceived attempt by [the] MK leadership to infiltrate armed units into South Africa – the 'Wankie campaign'...failed dismally.'<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Black is used in the black consciousness context meaning oppressed people

<sup>32</sup> F. Meli, *A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988) p.162

<sup>33</sup> Although the PAC criticised the ANC, as soon as they learnt of the ANC's presence in Rhodesia, they too sent guerrillas to Rhodesia. These were captured and served sentences with members of the Luthuli Detachment in Botswana in 1967. See SITREP s. n. 41

<sup>34</sup> D. McKinley, *The ANC and the liberation struggle*, (London, Pluto Press, 1997) p.35



Whilst James April, a Wankie campaign veteran, says other liberation movements praised the bravery and courage of the joint ANC-ZAPU guerrillas:

The bravery of the Wankie guerrillas meant that oppressed people around the world could once again hold their heads high.<sup>35</sup>

In the assessment of the Wankie campaign I explain how this event came to mark a turning point for both the ANC and the Rhodesian-South African security forces, as both parties would reassess their strategies. The ANC would do it at the Morogorro Conference in 1969. Likewise the campaign paved the way for South Africa's operations on the border and consolidated existing co-operation between South Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonial authorities. It is likely that this triad learnt valuable lessons and this prepared them for the later 'full scale war on the border'.

The ensuing two ANC-ZAPU Rhodesian incursions that followed the Wankie campaign became known as the Sipolilo campaign and fall outside the ambit of this study, although they shall be briefly mentioned in the conclusion.

This mini-thesis pieces together the different accounts and stories, so as to provide a more comprehensive picture of the Wankie campaign and is premised on existing knowledge as found in the secondary sources which I have utilised. This information has been complemented with the relevant archival documents that have now come to light in the archives of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF),<sup>36</sup> the trial record of James April, a member of the Luthuli Detachment, as well as oral interviews which I conducted.<sup>37</sup>

#### **4. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE**

During my research I utilised the archives of the SANDF. This was the first time a member of the public accessed the files pertaining to the Wankie campaign.

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<sup>35</sup>Interview with James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

<sup>36</sup> The archival documents now fall within the mandate of the SANDF although they pertain to the South African Defence Force (SADF). The National Archives Act of South Africa (Act 43 of 1996) has made access to archival records much easier.

<sup>37</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971

I also utilised a copy of the trial record of James April who was convicted on three counts of terrorism and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment in May 1971. The evidence presented by the State on the Wankie campaign during the trial is particularly interesting. Other Luthuli Detachment members were also tried and convicted in South Africa however their trial records were not accessed due to time and financial constraints.<sup>38</sup>

This mini-thesis has gaps: the files of the South African Security Police could not be accessed partly due to red tape and partly due to the fact that there is no certainty whether these files still exist, and if so, where they are physically located. Neither could I access the files of the Rhodesian security forces in Zimbabwe. The process to acquire permission to utilise the Zimbabwean archives is a long, tedious and expensive one. For the purpose of this study it was not viable to pursue this latter source.

Notwithstanding the access to information in South Africa today, the history of the ANC (and other liberation organisations) remains largely under-written, and to a large extent remains in the memories of those who participated in the struggle.<sup>39</sup>

An important part of writing the history of South Africa's liberation movement therefore means using oral testimonies. Pioneering projects on oral recollections thus far include Hilda Bernstein's, The Rift: The exile experience<sup>40</sup> the Mayibuye Centre's Oral History Project and the recent establishment of the Road to Democracy Research Project.<sup>41</sup>

These are unfortunately not sufficient. Within the context of the Wankie campaign the oral testimonies of the guerrillas are valuable as they lend a different perspective to information found in newspaper reports, court records or other documentation.

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<sup>38</sup> For example, see the trial of Daluxola Luthuli and 10 other accused, quoted in Prisoners of Apartheid: a biographical list of political prisoners and banned persons in South Africa (London, IDAF with UN Centre against Apartheid, 1978) p.33

<sup>39</sup> Legislation like The Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act no. 2 of 2000) and The National Archives Act of South Africa (Act 43 of 1996) both passed since 1994 has made access to information easier.

<sup>40</sup> London Jonathan Cape, 1994

<sup>41</sup> The Road to Democracy Project was launched by President Thabo Mbeki on 21 March 2001 in Pretoria

These testimonies help to reveal the human agency in the conflict, although there are potential problems such as age, fading of memories and bias.

In terms of oral testimony I interviewed a Luthuli Detachment member namely James April. I also interviewed Dr Pallo Jordan, MP, and member of the ANC's National Executive Committee, and an observer of the period in which the Wankie campaign took place. Terence February<sup>42</sup> and Marcus Solomon,<sup>43</sup> provided interviews on Basil February. Trevor Oosterwyk, an activist from the Western Cape was interviewed on Basil February and James April.

During the Wankie campaign both sides claimed victories. This was in a sense reflected in the publications of the mainstream South African and Rhodesian media, and in the publications of the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), like *Sechaba* and *The African Communist*. In the course of this mini-thesis I briefly examine the South African media's coverage of the Wankie campaign. What exactly was conveyed to the general population about the fighting in Rhodesia? As it is not possible to do a comprehensive study of the media I selected few clippings from the following newspapers *The Cape Argus*, *The Cape Times*, and *The Star*. I also briefly analyse the Luthuli Detachment's place in popular history and memory with specific reference to the Western Cape and the story of James April and Basil February.

A point of controversy during the course of the Wankie campaign was the issue of casualties on both sides. In order to ascertain as much accuracy as possible I utilised the ANC's submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in which the names and dates are given of ANC members who died in exile and include the names of the Luthuli Detachment. I accept this information, by and large, as the most accurate available. For the Rhodesian casualties I surfed the World Wide Web and found the Rhodesian Roll of Honour, which includes the names of the Rhodesian soldiers who fell during the country's civil war. Although this is not an official web site, it does provide a basis to measure casualties with, and I accept the information it provides, by and large as accurate. I was unable to access information on the casualties suffered by ZAPU or the South African security forces.

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<sup>42</sup> Brother to Basil February

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE**  
**LUTHULI DETACHMENT GUERRILLAS**

**From peaceful resistance to armed struggle**

The ANC was formed in 1912 and for almost 50 years the organisation followed a strategy of non-violent resistance.<sup>44</sup>

In 1960, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), a breakaway group from the ANC called on people to hold peaceful protests against the pass laws, which obliged African men to carry, passes. Through the mechanism of the pass laws that were part of the migrant labour system the Apartheid government, *inter alia*, regulated the movement of African men between the Bantustans (the rural reserves) and the towns.

On 21 March 1960 the South African Police Force (SAPF) shot at peaceful anti-pass law demonstrators, at Sharpeville in Vereeniging and Langa in Cape Town. As a result 69 people died, including eight women and ten children, and 180 people were injured.<sup>45</sup>

After the Sharpeville and Langa shootings, on 8 April 1960 the South African government declared a State of Emergency. The ANC, the PAC and many other organisations within the liberation fold were outlawed. The government arrested, tortured and exiled many people, 90-day detentions and solitary confinement were enforced.<sup>46</sup> The government arrested or detained more than 11 000 people under these emergency regulations.<sup>47</sup>

After the State of Emergency and many debates about the future or non-future of peaceful protest, individual members of the ANC adopted the armed struggle as its principal strategy.<sup>48</sup> To this effect a leaflet was issued on 16 December 1961

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<sup>43</sup> A member of the Yu Chi Chan Club<sup>43</sup>

<sup>44</sup> R. Davies (*et al*), The struggle for South Africa: A reference guide to movements, organizations and institutions (UK, Zed Books, 1985) p. 283

<sup>45</sup> T. Lodge, Black politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.210

<sup>46</sup> M. Benson (ed) THE SUN WILL RISE: Statements from the dock by Southern African political prisoners (London, IDAF, 1981) p.4

<sup>47</sup> H. Barrell, MK: the ANC's armed struggle (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.3

<sup>48</sup> R. Davies (*et al*), The struggle for South Africa: A reference guide to movements, organizations and institutions (UK, Zed Books, 1985) p. 283

announcing the formation of the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), meaning the Spear of the Nation. The leaflet was distributed by the MK High Command in the different cities and proclaimed the existence of MK. It stated amongst other things,

Umkhonto we Sizwe will carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by new methods, which are necessary to complement the actions of the established national liberation organisations...The people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom.<sup>49</sup>

Between 1961 and 1963 MK embarked upon a strategy of sabotage. Its cadres learnt how to make bombs and other explosive devices. Their targets were never civilian instead they were government buildings, railway lines, electrical power lines, installations and so forth.<sup>50</sup>

### **Political activity in Africa**

In February 1962, Nelson Mandela, Supreme Commander of MK attended the inaugural conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) and toured North African countries. Following on this visit, countries like Morocco, Liberia and Algeria opened its training camps to South Africans and the first ANC military training camps were established.

In 1963, the newly established OAU set up a Liberation Committee whose purpose it was to funnel assistance to the recognised liberation movements in Africa including the ANC in South Africa, Frelimo in Mozambique, the MPLA in Angola and the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau. The South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and ZAPU formed a loose alliance. Resources were however limited. Most of the assistance came from the Soviet Union and its East European allies.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) manifesto, December 1961. The decision to embark on the armed struggle was not an organisational one, but was taken by individual members of the ANC.

<sup>50</sup> T. Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) pp.235-7

In 1964, the sabotage activities of the MK High Command ended with their arrest on Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia, Johannesburg. Members of the ANC High Command included Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Andrew Mlangeni, Govan Mbeki, Rusty Bernstein and Dennis Goldberg. The arrest of the MK High Command was a serious blow to the ANC's efforts at armed struggle. It would take some time before the ANC and its allies were able to mount a new military effort against the Apartheid State. This time the military attack would have to be planned and executed from exile.

Some members of the PAC had already been imprisoned subsequent to the Poqo<sup>52</sup> uprising of 1961. In 1964 the Rivonia trialists were sentenced to life imprisonment and members of the Yu Chi Chan Club<sup>53</sup> received sentences ranging from five to 10 years. All served their sentences on Robben Island. By the middle of the 1960s, the South African security forces had effectively crushed the internal network of the ANC and other extra-parliamentary organisations.

### **The environment of exile politics**

By 1965, state repression had effectively destroyed the political base and military capacity of the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) inside South Africa.<sup>54</sup> The focus of the ANC's work thus shifted to the leadership in exile and became the responsibility of particularly O.R. Tambo who became the acting President of the ANC.

This brought with it a new set of challenges, which the exiled leadership had to contend with. One, the organisation needed to maintain structures in foreign states whilst securing sources of external assistance. Two, the ANC leadership had to hold the exile movement together. Three, and most importantly the ANC needed to find new ways to direct and re-establish internal activity and support in South Africa as the repressive measures unleashed by the Apartheid government had severely affected its organisational capacity.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p.295

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p.241 Poqo was the name of the military wing of the PAC. The uprisings refer to their campaigns during the period 1962-3.

<sup>53</sup> This was a break away leftist group from the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) based in Cape Town.

<sup>54</sup> H. Barrell, *MK: the ANC's armed struggle* (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.18

<sup>55</sup> T. Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.295

Coupled with this the development of the external wing of the ANC had four major phases. The first phase from 1960-1963 focused on the establishment of a foreign mission and devoted itself chiefly to fundraising and diplomatic efforts, as well as the establishment of a military training programme.

The second phase began with the arrest of most of the internal leadership at Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia in mid-1963 and the responsibility of leading the ANC shifted to the external mission. The period 1963-1969 was distinguished by efforts to infiltrate South Africa via Rhodesia in a joint alliance with ZAPU, which led to skirmishes with the Rhodesian security forces that were later joined by the South African security forces in the Wankie area.

The third phase was from 1970-1976 and began with the collapse of the joint ANC-ZAPU operation and ended with the accession to power of Frelimo in Mozambique and the MPLA in Angola. This together with the exodus of thousands of young people in the months following the Soweto uprisings<sup>56</sup> created favourable conditions for the resumption of sabotage activity in South Africa. The third phase was characterised by ANC attempts to infiltrate organisers through normal immigration channels.

In the fourth phase, from 1976 onwards, the ANC reconstituted itself as a major force in South African black politics.

This study focuses on a period during the second phase of the development of the ANC's external wing, when the organisation needed to return to South Africa and perceived armed activity within the country as the primary means to rebuild an internal political base. There was also a great wish amongst the MK soldiers who had trained in a number of foreign countries to fight the Apartheid government.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Refers to the uprising in Soweto in 1976 when students protested against Afrikaans as a medium of teaching.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

### **Resuscitating the struggle in South Africa**

In the late 1960s and early 1970s South Africa was protected by a *cordon sanitaire* of colonial territories who themselves were engaged in counter-insurgency measures. South West Africa was under South African mandatory rule. Both Angola and Mozambique were still Portuguese territories. Whilst Rhodesia had unilaterally declared independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965, Ian Smith the Rhodesian Prime Minister was on friendly terms with his South African counterpart, John Vorster. Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, had all received independence by the end of 1968, but were too economically reliant on South Africa to provide a base for guerrilla warfare.<sup>58</sup>

Whilst the ANC leadership took stock of its specific situation of needing to re-establish a base in South Africa, a solution seemed to present itself due to developments in Rhodesia. Ian Smith's UDI from Britain forced the Zimbabwean nationalist movements to rethink its strategy. ZAPU was largely based in Zambia and after UDI decided to launch its armed struggle inside Rhodesia. Although Rhodesia faced international sanctions for unilaterally declaring independence from Britain the Smith government was kept afloat mainly by the South African government in Pretoria. Meli argues that the act of UDI brought the alliance between the white minority regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa out into the open.<sup>59</sup>

### **Constraints of armed struggle in the South African context**

An additional constraint to reactivating internal structures was the local conditions in South Africa, which did not allow for the establishment of successful guerrilla insurgencies such as in Angola and Mozambique. In these two countries, guerrillas could base their struggles in economically self-sufficient remote rural areas. In South Africa the situation was different. There was a repressive system of control on popular mobility and political expression. This extended to the Bantustans where the old, the women and children lived on the edge of starvation and depended on the wages of the male migrant workers, who lived and worked in the cities. The Bantustans were

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<sup>58</sup> T. Lodge, Black politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.295

<sup>59</sup> F. Meli, A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988) p.162



unable to support the people who lived there, let alone insurgency groupings of guerrillas, as most of the land was not arable.<sup>60</sup>

Analyses of rural revolution found the role of a middle peasantry as vital to the success of guerrilla movements. In South Africa there was no comparable group that could support guerrillas. Whilst in the towns, influx control and an extensive system of police informers served to inhibit political activity. Increasing security legislation and police powers were the chief intimidating factors and created a sense of fear and demoralisation amongst ordinary people. Lodge argues that these changing conditions within South Africa made the creation of relevant strategies from exile even more difficult.<sup>61</sup>

Lodge says the ANC continued to recruit trainees from within the country and ‘functioning ANC branches and Umkhonto [we Sizwe] cells must have continued the work of recruiting men for military training and dispatching them across the Botswana border’. He estimated that by 1970 the ANC had 2 000-guerrilla trainees in their camps.<sup>62</sup> Shubin disputes this, saying that by the middle of the 1960s the ANC was no longer able to recruit more guerrillas for training from within South Africa due to repression. The blows against the underground structures of the ANC in South Africa was so severe that recruitment and transportation of cadres for MK had ceased by the second half of the 1960s.<sup>63</sup>

By 1965 the ANC had a total of 800 guerrilla trainees in Tanzanian camps, or undergoing military training in China, the Soviet Union or Czechoslovakia.<sup>64</sup> After undergoing military training in different countries the MK guerrillas returned to camps in Africa where they led isolated existences. Chris Hani notes that ‘once you have trained an army, you have to deploy it. You cannot afford a moment of idleness with soldiers’.<sup>65</sup> Jordan says the ANC leadership experienced pressure from below to

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<sup>60</sup> The ANC in its document *Strategy and Tactics* later challenged this theory on guerrilla warfare.

<sup>61</sup> T. Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.296

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> V. Shubin, *ANC: a view from Moscow* (Bellville, Mayibuye Books, 1999) p.77

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> T. Mali, *Chris Hani: the sun that set before dawn* (Johannesburg, SACHED Books, 1993) p.39

return to South Africa.<sup>66</sup> This great wish amongst the guerrillas to return home was expressed by Graham Morodi in this way:

This time [66-67] we were asking the leadership that now we are trained and we feel we are okay. We are commanders and we feel that we can meet the enemy anywhere.<sup>67</sup>

### **The search for a route home via Mozambique**

At the time of the ANC-ZAPU alliance, the liberation movements throughout Southern Africa were adopting armed struggle, as their *modus operandi*. In Namibia the guerrilla movement was beginning and in Mozambique and Angola it was spreading.<sup>68</sup>

The ANC leadership struggled to successfully bring cadres back onto South African soil. In March 1967, two ANC activists were arrested in Botswana. In May 1967, a group of MK cadres headed by Josiah Jele were sent to Nyassa province in Mozambique. There the group stayed with Frelimo fighters for six weeks. When the ANC cadres attempted to move southwards towards South Africa they were ambushed and barely made it back to base. Another group spent five weeks in the Cabo Delgado province, but had to return to Tanzania. The ANC leadership concluded that it was impossible to return to South Africa via Mozambique.<sup>69</sup>

Shubin argues that in the late 1960s a route to South Africa via Mozambique was the least feasible of all potential routes. It required a lively imagination to think this was at all possible, as the small group of cadres would have to travel through territory spanning several hundreds of kilometres, which was controlled by colonial troops. Moreover the cadres did not speak the language of the local population. In 1967 Frelimo controlled only the northern areas of Mozambique close to the Tanzanian border and could only thus assist the ANC with their travel through the northern part

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Dr Pallo Jordan (Pretoria, January 1996)

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in R. Molapo, *'If you get a l-i-t-t-l-e leg of a dove you are satisfied!'* *Oral testimonies and the politics of armed conflict in South Africa 1961-1988*. (Paper presented to the MK conference 1 December 1995, Mayibuye Centre, University of the Western Cape) p.8

<sup>68</sup> F. Meli, *A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988) p.161

<sup>69</sup> V. Shubin, *ANC: a view from Moscow* (Bellville, Mayibuye Books, 1999) p.77

of Mozambique. It seemed as if the ANC had found a solution to the problem of getting their guerrillas to South Africa when they formed an alliance with ZAPU.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONTEXT OF THE ZAPU GUERRILLAS

In 1965, immediately after UDI, the Zimbabwean nationalist leaders were of the opinion that guerrilla warfare could provoke British intervention in Rhodesia. This assumption was based on the fact that the British government had indicated it would intervene militarily only if 'law and order' broke down in Rhodesia.<sup>70</sup>

The Zimbabwean nationalist leaders based their military strategy on the idea that, '...all that was necessary to end white domination was to train some guerrillas and send them home with guns: this would not only scare the whites but would ignite a wave of civil disobedience by blacks'.<sup>71</sup> Maxey asserts that the very rigid control and formal censorship of the mass media stopped the rapid spread of mass opposition by reinforcing the appearance of calm. When the Rhodesian government found itself in serious trouble it turned for external help to South Africa.<sup>72</sup>

ZAPU and its military wing ZPRA, with Joshua Nkomo as its leader was based in Zambia.<sup>73</sup> The other nationalist party was the Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) and its military wing was the Zimbabwean African National Liberation Army (ZANLA).<sup>74</sup> Both ZANU and the PAC received the bulk of their support from China. The Maoist approach to guerrilla warfare was quite different from the theories of the Soviet Union, which supported both ZAPU and the ANC.<sup>75</sup> One of the major differences between ZAPU and ZANU was the latter's conviction that physical attacks on Whites and their property were necessary.

ZAPU started its training schemes shortly after its formation in 1963 and from 1964 onwards Chikerema, its Vice-President went to a number of socialist countries on behalf the organisation to negotiate for increases to ZAPU's training facilities.

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<sup>70</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.5

<sup>71</sup> J. K. Celliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p.6

<sup>72</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe*, (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.5

<sup>73</sup> Or ZIPRA

<sup>74</sup> In this study, the names of the guerrilla wings as well as their parent party will be used.

<sup>75</sup> D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga war* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981) p.10

By 1966, ZAPU, which was the major black nationalist movement, realised that the British government would not intervene in Rhodesia. Celliers argues that ZAPU's armed wing also did not have the ability to force a collapse of law and order and cynically concludes that the major task of the insurgent forces was to convince the OAU of their existence and wish to overthrow the Smith government. This was vital if the black nationalists were to continue receiving political and financial support. It was also apparent that if Rhodesia were to become Zimbabwe, the black majority themselves would have to take up arms to fight for liberation.<sup>76</sup>

During the early years of the war, ZPRA bore the full responsibility for the war effort whilst the parent party ZAPU concentrated its efforts on mustering international support. ZANLA played a limited military role at that time.<sup>77</sup>

### **Who then were the ZAPU guerrillas?**

The nationalist organisations recruited guerrillas from inside Rhodesia and from the large immigrant community living in Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania and even the United Kingdom. The ZPRA cadres were better trained and equipped than ZANLA. One reason for this could be the strong support it received from the USSR, Cuba and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The Rhodesians found the ZPRA fighters more formidable and more disciplined.<sup>78</sup>

It was suggested that over ninety per cent of the fighting men in ZAPU were Ndebele, although they only comprised ten to twenty per cent of the Rhodesian population.<sup>79</sup> ZAPU commanders denied this tribal bias and Maxey concludes that recruitment appears to have been evenly spread over the country. He further quotes Boywer Bell, who used figures obtained from the Rhodesian authorities, which indicated that deceased guerrillas came from all the Rhodesian tribal groups with a pre-dominance of Ndebele. Boywer Bell concurred with 'ZAPU's claim to be a-tribal...and that its leadership and battle groups are mixed'.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> J.K. Celliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p.6

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> *Learning Nation* Volume 1, No.15 September 15-21, 1988, p.1.

<sup>79</sup> J.K. Celliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p. 7

<sup>80</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.10

Celliers argues that, 'ZAPU had the backing of the Matabeles, who constitute some 19% of Zimbabwe's black population, while ZANU had that of the loosely grouped Shona nations which constituted 77% of the black population'.<sup>81</sup>

ZAPU guerrillas, particularly in the early stages of the war received their training mainly in Russia, Cuba and Algeria, whilst some others received their training in Bulgaria, North Korea and Zaire (Katanga province). At a trial held in Rhodesia in 1968, a ZAPU guerrilla gave a brief description of the training he received in Russia. The classes lasted approximately four months and included a wide range of political and practical topics. Subjects included political science, aspects of intelligence work and the use of codes and ciphers. The guerrillas were given a run-down on the work of the CIA, MI6 and MI5, and the French and Federal German intelligence organisations. On the military side they were taught the use of explosives, hand-grenades, and how to use and assemble guns, rifles and pistols.<sup>82</sup>

Both ANC and ZAPU groups had a fairly formal structure with a commander and a political commissar. From 1966 to 1968, they were even dressed in semi-military uniforms.

### **The Chimurenga war in Rhodesia after UDI**

Both ZAPU and ZANU called the Zimbabwean phase of guerrilla warfare Chimurenga, a Shona name derived from the rebellions of 1896-1897. Rhodesian intelligence officers divided the Chimurenga war into three phases.<sup>83</sup> The first phase was from 1964 after Zambian independence when guerrillas began crossing the Zambezi River so as to infiltrate Rhodesia, until the end of Operation Excess in Mashonaland in 1968.

During this time, the first military engagement between the Rhodesian security forces and seven ZANLA guerrillas took place on 28 April 1966, near Sinoia, 100-km north west of Harare. This day is now commemorated in Zimbabwe as Chimurenga Day, marking the start of the war. The Sinoia group of guerrillas was part of three teams,

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<sup>81</sup> J.K. Celliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p.7

<sup>82</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.10

which had entered Rhodesia with the aim of cutting power lines and attacking White farmsteads. A second group murdered a white couple with the surname Viljoen on their farm near Hartley on 16 May 1966. Security forces later captured the insurgents. In total 13 of the 14 original insurgents were either captured or killed by security forces.<sup>84</sup> A little while later another ZANLA infiltration was detected near Sinoia. In the battle that followed seven insurgents were killed and a number captured.<sup>85</sup> The second phase covered the period 1968 until the attack on Altena Farm at the end of 1972.

The third phase was the rapid escalation of the war and several international attempts to achieve a negotiated settlement and ended with a cease-fire agreement signed on 21 December 1979.<sup>86</sup> It is in the context of the first phase of the war in Rhodesia that the Wankie campaign took place.

### **The plan underpinning the ANC-ZAPU alliance**

In 1966, Joe Modise, commander-in-chief of MK based himself in Zambia and with ZAPU military commanders conducted reconnaissance work into Rhodesia.<sup>87</sup> In April 1967 a plan for the prosecution of the armed struggle was put forward. 'After lengthy debates an order was issued that our men and women were to cross the Zambezi towards home'.<sup>88</sup> The decision by the ANC and ZAPU to operate jointly was approved by the ANC Executive in June 1967. Pallo Jordan comments that the Wankie campaign was most probably 'planned and executed by the most militant elements within MK'.<sup>89</sup> Lodge alleges that the SACP Central Committee was totally unaware of the Wankie campaign until news of the military operation hit the world's press.<sup>90</sup> Shubin disputes this pointing to the unreliability of Lodge's source namely a report in *Ikwezi*. The fact that Chris Hani was a member of the SACP and the political

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<sup>83</sup> J.K. Celliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia* (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p. 6

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p.7

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> D Martin and P Johnson, *The struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981) p. 9

<sup>87</sup> H Barrell, *MK: the ANC's armed struggle* (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.20

<sup>88</sup> F. Meli, *A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988) p.162. The Luthuli Detachment only had male guerrillas.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Pallo Jordan (Pretoria, January 1996)

<sup>90</sup> The SACP was a close working ally of the ANC.

commissar of the Luthuli Detachment made it highly unlikely that the SACP did not know of the plan beforehand.

By the middle of 1967, it was apparent that ZAPU's guerilla tactics had made no significant impact on the Rhodesian authorities and the ANC had no success in infiltrating guerrillas back into South Africa. Their plan was to send a joint MK-ZPRA force across the Zambezi River into northwest Rhodesia. This big group would split into two upon reaching the Wankie Game Reserve. The main MK column would march south, through the Rhodesian bush into South Africa. The second smaller column of MK soldiers would be part of a ZAPU unit. They would move east and set up a base at Lupane inside Rhodesia to commence a guerrilla war against the Ian Smith regime. This base would also provide a future transit base for MK infiltrators en route to South Africa. Chris Hani said MK hoped to build a 'Ho Chi Minh route to South Africa'.<sup>91</sup>

### **Preparations for the trip home**

Morodi, a Luthuli Detachment combatant received military training in Egypt after which he spent a year in the Soviet Union. He and some other ANC comrades returned to Zambia in early 1966.<sup>92</sup> In early 1967, Morodi and other MK recruits were all transferred from the Tanzanian camps to Joshua Nkomo's camp outside of Lusaka.

Another Luthuli Detachment combatant, Norman Duka, says that in early 1967 the ANC Chief representative in Dar-es-Salaam told him that the chance to go back home [to South Africa] had arrived. He and two others left by lorry to Zambia.

The guerrillas received a further five months of intensive training and political education. Chris Hani explains:

A lot of time was allocated for the detachment to be together in the bush to be able to train together in order to ensure that physically we were ready for the rigorous task that lay ahead. But in addition to the physical preparation there was also the political preparation, the need for us to forge an understanding between the forces of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the forces of

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<sup>91</sup> See C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.2

<sup>92</sup> Graham Morodi was also known as Mashego. He was a member of the Luthuli Detachment and joined the ANC in 1950 when it was still a legal organisation. He was a trade unionist and had worked as an organiser for the general Workers Union. See H. Bernstein, The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.162



ZAPU and to understand the historical necessity of the battles of Wankie.<sup>93</sup>

Importantly the diet of the combatants was greatly improved a few months before the campaign and everyone felt healthy.

At about this time the ANC President-General, Chief Albert Luthuli died in South Africa. The acting President Oliver Tambo declared a week of mourning and delayed the march of the guerrillas home. The Luthuli Detachment was thus named in honour of the late ANC President-General.<sup>94</sup>

The route chosen for the march home was explained by Morodi:

Some of our men who had been sent through Botswana were captured, and they were beaten up and sent back. So we choose that we have to go through Rhodesia, so that when we meet people there – the police or the army – we can be able to fight, because its not an independent African state and we know it's our enemy. So it was agreed.<sup>95</sup>

Before departing the guerrillas were issued with uniforms of Russian origin, which consisted of a tunic, a long pair of trousers and a hat. The uniform was made of khaki gabardine.<sup>96</sup> Each guerrilla received boots, which had a distinctive 8 pattern on the sole, and which unfortunately would later make it easier for the Rhodesian security forces to track them. (See Appendices 3,4,5) Each received a cloth-covered water bottle and a rucksack in which they carried food, private clothing and ammunition.

Each guerrilla was given a sub-machine gun with 300 rounds and a semi-automatic rifle with 300 rounds. Some, not all guerrillas received a pistol with 90 rounds of ammunition and each guerrilla was provided with two hand-grenades: defensive and offensive.<sup>97</sup> The day before departure each guerrilla was given a medical check up, and the group prepared for their long march home.

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<sup>93</sup> See C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.1

<sup>94</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.163

<sup>95</sup> See C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.1

<sup>96</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.66. Leonard Nkosi, the Luthuli Detachment chief of staff, later turned askari and state witness in the James April trial.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE LONG MARCH

A night before the crossing Norman Duka and 32 other people in his group were transported to the Rhodesian border in a lorry. They stopped for the night close to Katambora. The guerrillas checked that their guns and supplies were in order. They went over their plans once more and took care not to leave any trace of their presence and everything had to be buried or taken with them.<sup>98</sup>

Prior to the crossing an ANC-ZAPU reconnaissance team had preceded the detachment to select the best route possible to Rhodesia. On the morning of 31 July 1967, Oliver Tambo, together with Thomas Nkobi, the secretary-general of the ANC, Joe Modise, Commander in Chief of MK and Ndlovu of ZAPU stood on the cliff like banks of the Zambesi River to witness the crossing of the main ANC-ZAPU force.

Norman Duka says John Dube<sup>99</sup> the overall commanding officer of the joint unit of 80 men<sup>100</sup> addressed the combatants just before they crossed the Zambezi River:

Today we are beginning the long journey home, home to those we left behind with a promise to return. We must each be determined to see our task through to the end. The enemy is strong, we must not underestimate his strength; but we too are strong. We are now trained and will meet their bullets with our own.<sup>101</sup>

The Rhodesians had a routine aerial reconnaissance operation at the banks of the Zambezi River and the plan was to cross where the Rhodesians would least expect it.<sup>102</sup> The crossing point was hazardous and dangerous. It was west of Victoria Falls and close to Kazangula where the Kariba Dam begins. Thomas Nkobi later wrote:

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<sup>98</sup> B.C. Richmond, From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) p.71

<sup>99</sup> He was also known as Jackson Moloto

<sup>100</sup> Interview with James April (Cape town, September 1990). Varying figures have been given for the number of men in the joint ANC-ZAPU force. For example, D. Martin and P. Johnson, The struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981) p.10 gives 70 as the number and M. Horrell, Survey of Race Relations (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1967) p. 66 gives the number as 80 men. The latter is more accurate.

<sup>101</sup> B.C. Richmond, From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) p.71

<sup>102</sup> Interview with James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

When we reached the river and were shown the places selected for crossing, we could not believe our eyes. The commander explained that those were the best points because they were hazardous and difficult and therefore the last places the enemy could suspect.<sup>103</sup>

Two cadres moved to and fro across a strong Zambezi current from morning until late afternoon, conveying the party of 80 guerrillas to the other side. Crossing the river was no easy task. The combatants contended with a swift current, a deep gorge and sheer cliffs. As they crossed the Zambezi River, James April,<sup>104</sup> recalls how his close friend and comrade, Basil February<sup>105</sup> turned to him and said, 'We are crossing the Rubicon. The die is cast'.<sup>106</sup>

The crossing lasted throughout the night. Once the guerrillas had crossed the gorge into Rhodesia it was the early hours of the morning of 1 August 1967.

The crossing itself was a closely guarded secret. This most probably led to the incorrect date being used by various authors; for example Morris quotes 8 August and so does Lodge. This confusion is compounded by the fact that the guerrillas themselves during interrogation deliberately gave the incorrect date of the crossing to the Security Police.<sup>107</sup> The Rhodesians did, however, claim to know through intelligence reports that the ANC-ZAPU planned a big crossing into Rhodesia. Still, the presence of the ANC-ZAPU guerrillas caught them completely by surprise.

Chris Hani, recalls the high spirits of the cadres, and that the cohesion between the MK and ZPRA guerrillas was 'magnificent'. He adds, 'After crossing the river, there was a spirit of elation and joy, due to the fact that we had already crossed the first obstacle, namely the river...'<sup>108</sup>

### **The guerrillas enter Rhodesian soil**

Once the unit managed to cross the Zambezi River, they rested for their first night in Rhodesia, and the next morning they started marching. A group of approximately nine

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<sup>103</sup> T. Nkobi, "Crossing the Zambezi", *Dawn*, (Lusaka, ANC, Souvenir issue, 1986)

<sup>104</sup> He was also known as George Driver.

<sup>105</sup> He was also known as Paul Petersen.

<sup>106</sup> N. Van Driel, *The journey to Wankie: The story of a 'Coloured' MK soldier*, Unpublished History Honours essay, UWC, Bellville, 1991

<sup>107</sup> Even under interrogation some of the guerrillas did not disclose the correct date of the crossing. See Sitrep s.n.15.

<sup>108</sup> See C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @.www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html, p.1

guerrillas were sent to reconnoitre the area. They got lost and were never able to locate the main group. However, they later managed to reach Botswana.<sup>109</sup>

As a precautionary measure the guerrillas favoured taking cover during the day and moved mostly at night. Norman Duka says that Commander Moloto decided it was best to rest during the day, because of the heat and to march during the night. The Rhodesian security forces described the *modus operandi* of the guerrillas.

The group's intention was to move mainly at night and very little during the day. Their pattern was planned as follows:

- Walk from dusk until midnight.
- Rest from midnight to approximately 04h00 hours
- Walk from approximately 04h00hrs until dawn.
- Set up base camp and rest throughout the day.<sup>110</sup>

The planners of the march estimated that it would take the South African-bound group 10 or 12 days to reach the South African border, if they were to head in the direction of how the crow flies.<sup>111</sup>

### **The first week of the march**

During the first days of the march the guerrillas made camp during the day and built small fires in the ground over which they warmed their tin food. Once the group set up camp, all positions were assigned in case of an attack. The posting of guards was done on a rotational basis.<sup>112</sup>

Late in the afternoon the guerrillas would clean their camp and bury the fires and food tins. The group commanders would check that no presence of the guerrillas remained. At sunset the group would set off on their journey. During this period they saw not a soul, black or white. However, their pace was slower than anticipated and their rations were decreasing.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Wilson Zola was in this group.

<sup>110</sup> See *Rhodesia Debriefs BGG 210/3/11/2 Vol.1*, p.7 Appendix 2

<sup>111</sup> B.C. Richmond, *From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka* (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) p.71

<sup>112</sup> See page 80 more details.

One evening the guerrillas neared a village. They saw cattle and people in the distance and decided to circle the village not wishing to make unnecessary contact with the local population. By the seventh day the group had run completely out of food and water was scarce. Everyone was hungry, thirsty and weak and their clothes were sweaty and dirty.<sup>114</sup>

From the very beginning, the major problems that faced the guerrillas throughout their march, were a lack of water and a shortage of food. They were not familiar with the terrain and had expected ‘...to come across streams and rivulets with water’.<sup>115</sup> Instead, the further the guerrillas moved away from the Zambezi River, the drier the land and the scarcer water became. At that time, most people living away from the Zambezi River got their water from boreholes. Unfortunately, the commencement of the march coincided with the dry season in Rhodesia. The guerrillas marched for days without food. This lack of food and water necessitated earlier contact with people than expected.

The big ANC-ZAPU group marched for a week before they reached the Wankie Game Reserve. They had marched for about 300 miles through the bush when they reached the town of Wankie.<sup>116</sup> The unit sent someone to buy food supplies as the guerrillas had no pre-arranged contacts amongst the local population.<sup>117</sup> The chief who assisted the guerrillas had this to say:

Yes, it’s very good that you people are here. And I am here not satisfied. The Smith regime they sent me without my consent and my people here to the stones. We can’t plough. And after they put me here, they say I must watch for guerrillas not to pass through here, ja, ja. So I’m also fighting the boers, I’m going to help you all.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> B.C. Richmond, From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) p.71

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> See C. Hani, “The Wankie Campaign”, @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.1

<sup>116</sup> H. Bernstein, The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.163

<sup>117</sup> H Barrell, MK: the ANC’s armed struggle (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.21

<sup>118</sup> H. Bernstein, The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.163 p. 164

So the guerrillas were received with enthusiasm and given supplies. Be that as it may, Barrell argues that this contact was a grave risk, which the group had been compelled to make prematurely.<sup>119</sup>

### **The detachment splits into two**

In the northern part of the Wankie Game Reserve the detachment split into two, with each group going their separate ways. Leonard Nkosi claims the group split into three.<sup>120</sup> All other indications are that the ANC-ZAPU detachment split into two and not three: the bigger group was bound for South Africa and the smaller group for Lupane in eastern Rhodesia. As time went on smaller groups broke away from the two big groups. As the guerrillas progressed further into the game reserve there was only bush and animals. Poor maps and compasses did not help either.

Lennox Lagu<sup>121</sup> was the commander of the MK group consisting of about 56 soldiers heading south towards South Africa and included Chris Hani, Peter Mfene, Douglas Wana, Mbijana, Victor Dlamini, Castro, Mashigo, Paul Sithole, Desmond, Wilson Msweli, Shooter Makasi, Eric Nduna, Basil February and James April.<sup>122</sup>

Whilst the second group consisting of 23 men headed east towards Lupane, with the intention of setting up a ZAPU base. The commander of this group was Madzimba Matho of ZAPU who was deputised by Andries Motsepe of the ANC.<sup>123</sup> Their mission was to go and blow up a bridge.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> H Barrell, *MK: the ANC's armed struggle* (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.20

<sup>120</sup> According to the evidence given by Leonard Nkosi at the trial of James April, the ANC/ZAPU group split into three and not two. There is no evidence to support his claim. The detachment split into two. See *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971 p.75

<sup>121</sup> Also known as Charlie Mjojo

<sup>122</sup> See C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.1 Basil February was actually not part of this group. He joined the Lupane-bound group. Interview James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

<sup>123</sup> Motsepe later died in battle. See Comrade Rodgers, "Heroes of our revolution", in *Dawn*, (Lusaka, ANC, Souvenir issue, 1986) p.20

**Who were the Rhodesian security forces that the ANC-ZAPU guerrillas would soon come into contact with?**

The Rhodesian security forces consisted of the Army, the Air Force and the British South Africa Police (BSAP). There were close links between the police and the army and the two worked together to thwart insurgency actions along the Zambezi valley. In 1966 the Rhodesians set up a joint counter-insurgency organisation. However, the air force and the air arm of the police remained White only.<sup>125</sup> The Rhodesian airforce at the time of UDI comprised 99 aircraft. This was not adequate for battle, so South African assistance during the 1967 insurgency included the dispatch of South African aircraft for use by Rhodesians.<sup>126</sup>

The Rhodesian army had three components namely the paratrooper Special Air Squadron (SAS) (White), the Rhodesian Light infantry (RLI) (White) and the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR), (African but with White officers). At UDI the army consisted of 3 400 men. There were also 4 000 White reservists in four active and four reserve territorial force battalions of the Rhodesian regiment.<sup>127</sup>

Within the Rhodesian army, Africans played an important role, as their tracking skills were invaluable to its White members. The Rhodesian regime claimed that the existence of the RAR was testimony to the support enjoyed by African Rhodesians. The majority of RAR troops were drawn from Rhodesia's East Victorian region; they were family connected and were from the Vakaranga tribe, i.e. part of the Mashona. A *Guardian* journalist asked an African RAR sergeant major why he fought for the Rhodesian security forces, his answer was:

I am fighting for Rhodesia. It is my home...They [the guerrillas] come with Chinese grenades and guns and the people are frightened of them. I am sorry for some of them, but this communist thing is no good for Rhodesia.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.164

<sup>125</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.30 He lists the specific number of aircraft, which was held by the Rhodesian Airforce.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

The army offered Africans the opportunity of earning a good salary at a time when unemployment was high. Maxey cites cases of dissatisfaction among African RAR members saying:

...the nationalists have claimed that some African members of the army have refused to fight in the Zambezi, and as a result, 113 soldiers were imprisoned in a camp near Salisbury, in February 1968.<sup>129</sup>

### **When was the first guerrilla caught?**

Celliers implies that the guerrillas miscalculated the attitude of the local black population who informed the security forces of their presence.<sup>130</sup> The Rhodesian Situation Report reveals that the first guerrilla was caught on 7 August:

One guerrilla was captured south of Wankie. Interrogation revealed that he was one of a gang of 6 consisting of 3 ANC and 3 ZAPU men. The ANC was heading for Johannesburg.<sup>131</sup>

This is contrary to Shay and Vermaak's claim that on Tuesday 10 August,<sup>132</sup> the first guerrilla was arrested at a mission station near Wankie. Maxey says the Rhodesian authorities were unaware of the presence of the guerrillas until nine days after the initial crossing when a guerrilla was captured, about 70 miles from the point of crossing.<sup>133</sup>

On Saturday, 12 August another guerrilla was arrested near Dett, approximately 30 miles from where the first guerrilla was arrested and a third man who was with him escaped in a stolen car and died in a shoot out with police near Figtree.<sup>134</sup>

By now the Rhodesian security forces had gleaned information about the insurgent guerrillas. At first their information was insufficient and they did not realise the number of guerrillas involved and the full extent of the crossing. The interrogation of the first two guerrillas caught gave the Rhodesians some idea that there were others in Rhodesia. It seems that the detained guerrillas used delaying tactics and did not reveal

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.p.34

<sup>130</sup> J.K. Celliers, *Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia*, (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p.7

<sup>131</sup> Sitrep s.n. 6

<sup>132</sup> R. Shay, & C. Vermaak, *The silent war* (Rhodesia, Galaxie Press, 1971) p.50 According to the calendar of 1967, 10 August was a Thursday.

<sup>133</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p. 64

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. The guerrilla who died at Figtree was Basil February. Maxey says the guerrilla was killed near Bulawayo.



everything.<sup>135</sup> So the Rhodesian authorities only learnt about the full extent of the crossing a bit later.<sup>136</sup>

### **The Battle of Nyatuwe<sup>137</sup>**

About a week after the detachment split into two the Lupane-bound group was the first to encounter the Rhodesian security forces. The Rhodesians realising the presence of the guerrillas, swiftly sent a RAR unit called Command 1 Brigade to the Wankie Valley area where the first clash between the brigade and the guerrillas occurred on Sunday 13 August, and lasted for about ten hours.

Comrade Rodgers, a Wankie veteran gives a vivid and dramatic account of the battle that took place between Wankie and Dett on the banks of the Nyatuwe River, which was dry at the time.<sup>138</sup> The Lupane-bound group reached the banks of the river early in the morning. After posting guards the guerrillas camped on the side of the river, which was meant to give, good cover against ‘airplanes, helicopters and distant people’.<sup>139</sup>

After eating and making camp for the day the guerrillas noticed spotter planes circling their position overhead at about 07h00, which they ignored. This proved to be a fatal error. At about 08h30 the guerrillas heard a deafening salvo of automatic rifle fire and a “boer” voice bellowed: “SURRENDER”.<sup>140</sup> The spotter aircraft must have reported the position of the guerrillas to the Rhodesian ground troops. This sudden attack caused momentary confusion amongst some of the guerrillas although some managed to take position and return fire.

Masimini was shouting at the top of his voice saying he will shoot any son-of-a-bitch who ran away, ordering them to fire back. Others had merely taken cover and were not firing at the enemy...On the way I

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<sup>135</sup> See p.35

<sup>136</sup> See SITREP s.n. 40

<sup>137</sup> Comrade Rodgers, “The Battle of Nyatuwe”, *Dawn*, Souvenir issue (Lusaka, ANC, 1986) p.47.

The Rhodesians called the place Inyatue. See *Rhodesia Debriefs BGG210/3/11/2 Vol.1*

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.pp.47-48

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. p.47

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

met Zami (Bothwell Tamane) who was alone manning another position, firing at the enemy.<sup>141</sup>

An important moment in the battle was when the guerrillas tried to reach the hillock close to the river. The Rhodesians tried to prevent this from happening and bombed the guerrillas' position. At one point a White officer shouted: "Surrender, you're surrounded." This was communicated through an interpreter in Shona and Ndebele. Rodgers asked Ronnie Dube of ZAPU to translate: "We will never surrender".<sup>142</sup>

The battle continued well into the afternoon. The Rhodesians had encircled the guerrillas and used two helicopters with 12.7mm machine guns to bombard them.<sup>143</sup>

By late afternoon, when the firing from both sides had quietened down Donda was found with a fatal wound to the back. Masimini was badly injured and had lost lots of blood. The guerrillas tried carrying him with a makeshift stretcher. This did not help. Masimini told them to leave him behind and proceed, "the corridor must be opened at all cost", he said.<sup>144</sup>

After the Battle of Nyatuwe, the guerrillas left during the night leaving four dead cadres and a fifth seriously injured. The fifth guerrilla James Masimini insisted on giving cover to the retreating ANC-ZAPU guerrillas. He died in the morning in a shoot out with the Rhodesian security forces. In this skirmish two members of the RAR were killed and three wounded.<sup>145</sup>

### **The Rhodesians drop leaflets – 'Surrender or die'**

During the Battle of Nyatuwe and the subsequent ones that followed, the Rhodesians tried to frighten the guerrillas by showering them with leaflets in English and Shona and called on the insurgents to "surrender or die". The leaflets offered amnesty to the guerrillas if they buried their arms and then walked to the security forces shouting: 'We do not want to die – save us – we are here'. The leaflets had little effect on the

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. p.48

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. See K. Maxey, The fight for Zimbabwe (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.65

guerrillas.<sup>146</sup> See Appendix 7 for a copy of the leaflet. Appendix 8 is an example of the leaflets given to the local Rhodesian population by the authorities.

### **The South African Security Police become involved**

By 17 August 1967, the South African Security Police were assisting the Rhodesian authorities with the interrogation of captured guerrillas and the following information was gleaned:<sup>147</sup>

- Two ANC guerrillas were arrested. A further four guerrillas were shot dead during a skirmish, of which two were ANC members namely, James Masimani and David Sibojeni. Another guerrilla was shot dead close to Wankie and another one that was arrested escaped.<sup>148</sup>
- In Botswana three guerrillas were arrested and are thought to be members of the ANC and PAC. One's name is George Muuyane.
- During interrogation it was revealed that a group of 30 guerrillas of which between 16 and 20 are ANC members were told on Thursday 3 August to prepare for a journey to the Republic of South Africa. On Friday 4 August, a Landrover and other vehicles took them from Linanda near Lusaka, to a farm close to Livingstone.
- Here they were fitted out with backpacks and resources. They were taken straight from the farm to the Zambezi River. Between 08h00 and 04h00 the next morning they crossed the river in a motorboat that could take three passengers, at a time. A Coloured man took them across the river.
- The guerrillas hid in the bushes and moved at night until they reached a place called Masue close to a railway line where the group of 30 split into two. One group followed the railway line in a southern direction and the other group moved off in an easterly direction. A ZAPU guerrilla led one of the groups.
- The group's instructions was to reach Bulawayo and go to the Old Location where they would meet an unknown ZAPU leader who would give them further instructions as well as explosives.

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> The following was revealed when Lieutenant Pretorius, of the SA Army interviewed Lieutenant Scholtz of the South African Security Police. See Taakmag 4 GPI File INT/c/21/1 SWA (Feitlike Inligting) pp.14-16

- One of the arrested guerrillas told the Rhodesian Police that the group of 30 guerrillas consisted of 29 ANC members and one ZAPU member. Their instructions were to move south to South Africa by passing residential areas. They were also instructed to avoid Botswana because of a water shortage and the fact that the residents of Botswana were not sympathetic enough.
- Lieutenant Pretorius was certain that the farm mentioned is Drummond Park farm, the ANC camp, which is, situated 4,5 miles north west of Livingstone and four miles north of the Zambezi River.<sup>149</sup>

### **What happened to the Lupane-bound group after the battle of Nyatuwe?**

The next engagement took place on 18 August<sup>150</sup> with the Lupane-bound guerrillas who were continuing with their march. The Rhodesians claim the incident involved 15 guerrillas at MJ950880.<sup>151</sup> Comrade Rodgers described what happened like this:

We continued fighting but were ultimately overpowered by the enemy. By then only seven of us were remaining, five ZAPU comrades, myself and Bothwell.<sup>152</sup>

Eight guerrillas were killed, six were captured and one escaped. Large quantities of ammunition and arms were captured.<sup>153</sup>

### **ANC-ZAPU issues a joint communiqué**

On 19 August 1967, ANC Oliver Tambo and the Vice-President of ZAPU James Chikerema issued a joint communiqué outlining the military alliance between the ANC and ZAPU and the reason for the joint campaign.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> These names are not spelt correctly but are reflected as such in the archival document listed immediately below.

<sup>149</sup> From *Taakmag 4 GPI File INT/c/21/1, SWA (Feitlike Inligting)*

<sup>150</sup> Comrade Rodgers, "The Battle of Nyatuwe", *Dawn*, Souvenir issue (Lusaka, ANC, 1986) p.48. He estimates the time of the next engagement to be seven or ten days after the Battle of Nyatuwe. Instead it was five days. During the march the guerrillas tended to lose track of time and sometimes became confused with the days of the week.

<sup>151</sup> Sitrep s.n.12

<sup>152</sup> Comrade Rodgers, "The Battle of Nyatuwe", *Dawn*, Souvenir issue (Lusaka, ANC, 1986) p.48

<sup>153</sup> Sitrep s.n.12

<sup>154</sup> From *Sechaba*, October 1967 @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or67-6html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/or67-6html)

Furious fighting has been and is taking place in various parts of Southern Rhodesia. From the thirteenth of this month, the area of Wankie has been the scene of the most daring battles ever fought between freedom fighters and the white oppressor's army in Rhodesia.

... We wish to declare here that that the fighting that is presently going on in the Wankie area is indeed being carried out by a combined force of ZAPU and ANC which marched into the country as comrades-in-arms on a common route, each bound to its destination. It is the determination of these Combined Forces to fight the common settler enemy to the finish, at any point of encounter as they make their way to their respective zones.<sup>155</sup>

### **The South African-bound group continues marching south**

The South African-bound group continued on its southward journey. The guerrillas were now hunting game and one managed to shoot a buck, which provided food for two days.

They became aware of the Lupane-bound group's skirmishes with the Rhodesian security forces as they had a radio with them.<sup>156</sup> On the twelfth day after crossing the Zambezi River, the guerrillas came to the Wankie valley. There they saw spotter planes flying very high. At a small river they filled their canteens and washed their socks and uniforms. Two groups scouted the area, the one looking for game and the other checking what was happening on the road ahead. No game was found and commander Moloto divided the remainder of the meat amongst the men.<sup>157</sup>

Early in the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> day three of the guerrillas went hunting and spotted some zebras. They managed to wound one. Everyone was very happy and excited about the capture of the zebra that was too heavy to move. Instead the guerrillas moved to where the zebra was and made camp. Fires were built, the zebra was skinned and large chunks of meat were roasted. Duka remembers, 'Everyone ate as much as they could. The men stacked their knapsacks with roast meat. The remainder

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Interview with James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

<sup>157</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.163

of the meat was left behind.’ At dusk, after this feast the guerrillas covered their fires, picked up their rucksacks and continued marching.<sup>158</sup>

The guerrillas experienced another food shortage but continued marching. There was also no water. The next time they found water, they did not stop to use purifying tablets, and they hastily quenched their thirst.<sup>159</sup>

The guerrillas marched for several more nights and had no contact with villagers. Their main priority was to reach South Africa without engaging the Rhodesian security forces. They saw lots of elephants and lions. The group stayed for about 10 days without food – and were forced to eat leaves from the trees. At one point they managed to shoot a dove and make some soup from it.<sup>160</sup>

### **The South African-bound group clash with the Rhodesian security forces**

About a week after the Lupane-bound group first clashed with the Rhodesian security forces the hungry South Africa-bound group noticed enemy aerial reconnaissance. The guerrillas now more than ever moved only at night and dug themselves in during the day. Just before dawn they reached a large village. The guerrillas were very hungry. Whilst the group set up camp four comrades were sent to the village to see if they could buy a goat. Two unarmed guerrillas went to ask for food while the other two covered them at a distance with rifles. The men had orders neither to disclose their number nor to say what they were doing. Prior to the detachments’ departure from Zambia, ZAPU had made a radio broadcast to the Zimbabwean people saying that if anyone approached their village for help it should be given, ‘These are our sons, fighting for a free Zimbabwe’.<sup>161</sup>

When they got to the post they found an old man, who said they were expecting the guerrillas and that he had been told to give them food. The men were away from their cattle post as it was Sunday, and would only return the following day with food.

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<sup>158</sup> B. C. Richmond, From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) p.71

<sup>159</sup> H. Bernstein, The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.164

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. pp.164-165

<sup>161</sup> B.C. Richmond, From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) p.78

Instead the old man gave them four gallons of sour milk and a bit of porridge.<sup>162</sup> Just as the guerrillas completed their drink they heard gunfire. They then heard shouting: ‘Surrender! Commandos! Surrender! Surrender! *Apanzan shaida*’ – in Shona this means that you can’t do nothing’.<sup>163</sup> The guerrillas returned fire and the Rhodesian security forces ran away leaving behind their kitbags with clothing and food.

Leonard Nkosi describes the same event. His group met the Rhodesian security forces as they left the Wankie Game Reserve, at the end of August. It was 22 August to be exact.

We were marching early in the morning – very early. We heard a cock crow and then we realised that there must be somebody living nearby. At that stage we were very weak and tired, and hungry.<sup>164</sup>

Early that afternoon they noticed enemy vehicles in the distance and prepared for battle. The RAR patrol ran into the South African bound group, while it followed a specially laid false trail.<sup>165</sup> The cadres held back and did not fire. They wished to avoid unnecessary contact and to safeguard precious ammunition. What happened next is best described in Hani’s words:

...the enemy got impatient. They stood up and began to ask: ‘Where are the terrorists?’ This was when there was a fusillade of furious fire from us...They simply ran for their dear lives leaving behind food, ammunition and communication equipment...This was the first time that we had what I can call a civilised meal – cheese, biltong, meat and other usual rations carried by the regular army...For us that day was a day of celebrations because with our own eyes we had seen the enemy run...A feeling of faith in one another and recognition of the courage of the unit developed...There was no going back.<sup>166</sup>

The RAR patrol led by Patrol Officer Hopkins describes the battle in this way:

We did not see them until they opened fire. The whole action was confined to about 300 yards but because of the difficult country, and

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<sup>162</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) pp.164-165. During the march the guerrillas tended to lose track of time and sometimes became confused with the days of the week. Although Morodi says these events occurred on a Sunday, it was a Tuesday.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.76

<sup>165</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p. 65

<sup>166</sup> See C. Hani, “The Wankie Campaign”, @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), pp.2-3

our limited force, we could not surround them. There was firing all afternoon and it kept movement to a minimum. It was a tricky situation.<sup>167</sup>

Hani estimates that MK lost three members namely Charles Seshoba, Sparks Moloi and Baloi and one was wounded.<sup>168</sup> ‘We must have killed between 12 and 15, including a lieutenant, a sergeant major, a warrant officer and a number of other soldiers’.<sup>169</sup> Morodi also says, ‘We have killed about fifteen of them, they killed three of us from the first section. So they run away, and we captured this food’.<sup>170</sup> Nkosi claims four people died in his group during this encounter. In the Rhodesian group he saw one European dead and one non-European dead.<sup>171</sup> Lieutenant Smith and an African sergeant major died in this battle.<sup>172</sup>

As the Rhodesian soldiers retreated, the MK soldiers captured their supplies of arms, radios, food, and clothing including the camouflage uniform of the Rhodesians.

Hani says this about that first important battle:

It was a memorable victory and to every soldier victory is very important... [that] this was a virgin victory for us since we had never fought with modern weapons against the enemy. For us that day was a day of celebrations because with our own eyes we had seen the enemy run. We had seen the enemy frozen with fear... We had also seen and observed each other reacting to the enemy’s attacks. A feeling of faith in one another and recognition of the courage of the unit developed.<sup>173</sup>

Although the guerrillas were tired and weak from not having eaten, they were able to cause the Rhodesians to flee leaving behind their food and firearms. Immediately after the battle the guerrillas rushed to the belongings of the fleeing Rhodesian soldiers.

The first thing we hurried to, because we were very hungry – we went to the bags, which contained the food and we also, collected their firearms.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>167</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.65

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. See list of ANC members who died in exile at

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/deathlst.html>

<sup>169</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.165

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.76

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. p.100

<sup>173</sup> C. Hani, “The Wankie Campaign”, @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.3

<sup>174</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.76



The food and clothing of the fleeing Rhodesian security forces came in handy, as the guerrillas were very hungry. Morodi recalls this anecdote:

...I saw something like toothpaste. I open it. It was condensed milk, I drink, then Lennox he says to me, 'No no no. You know it's the law of the guerrilla anything that you pick up you must report to the commander – otherwise they are going to shoot you. But I drink. Then he took another one and he also drinks. I said, 'Now they are going to shoot both of us! [Laughs] Then we get together, we report whatever we have captured there.'<sup>175</sup>

Some of the guerrillas put on the Rhodesian uniforms, but took off the badges. Helicopters and spotter planes were flying low all the time. The guerrillas also captured a radio and could listen to the helicopter signals.

Hopkins' patrol followed this group, which seemed to be heading for the Botswana border.<sup>176</sup> On 23 August, a day after the first battle with the South African-bound group a second platoon under the command of Lieutenant William Rodney Winnall, was sent in to pursue the guerrillas in conjunction with Hopkin's patrol. However, the Rhodesians first planned and carried out a furious bombardment against the group. Lieutenant Winnall says of the aerial strike:

At approximately 4 o'clock I was given the order to halt my advance as [an] air strike was going in. The strike went, in fact, approximately five to six miles ahead of where we were actually based. That was the only strike that went in.<sup>177</sup>

The South African buccaneer jets and helicopters missed the guerrillas by about two kilometres. This bombing by the airforce had little effect on the guerrillas.<sup>178</sup> So the Rhodesian Royal Air Force had tried to bombard Hani's group but missed them. The security forces pursuing the guerrillas consisting of two platoons and fifty men continued following the trail of the nationalists.

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<sup>175</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.165

<sup>176</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.65

<sup>177</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.94

<sup>178</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p. 66

The second battle took place that same day of the aerial bombardment against the guerrillas at about 4:30 p.m. The scene of the second skirmish was approximately five miles east of the first battle the previous day.<sup>179</sup>

The MK guerrillas surmised that the Rhodesian security forces were planning a mop-up operation for the day 23 August. Nkosi says the guerillas decided to outwit the pursuing Rhodesians by doubling back and lying in wait for their enemy and launched a surprise attack. Nkosi explains the tactics of the ANC-ZAPU group and what happened next:

On that day we heard that there were some people nearby us. Our commander then moved out to find out who these persons were. He was then wearing one of the Rhodesian security uniforms – one of those we had picked up...he came back running to us and told us that the Rhodesian forces have come down near us, and he gave us an order to move forward in a line towards them. We were sitting, waiting in that position. Our light machine guns were on the flanks and in the centre was another light machine gun, and in between those were the sub machine guns and the carbine.<sup>180</sup>

Hani explains that he was accompanied by James April,<sup>181</sup> Douglas Wana, Jack Simelane, Victor Dlamini and others and recalls the event in this way.

We crawled towards the enemy's position and first attacked their tents with grenades and then followed with our AKs and LMGs. The enemy fought back furiously and after fifteen minutes we called for reinforcements from the rear, and within ten minutes we overran the enemy's position... The enemy fled leaving behind supplies, weapons, grenades, uniforms and communication radios.<sup>182</sup>

Lieutenant Winnall commander of the RAR platoon stationed near Bulawayo remembers this same event. His platoon consisted of between 22 and 24 men, two police dog handlers patrol officers Thomas and Horn and two trackers [the latter presumably civilians] assisted the platoon.

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<sup>179</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p77. Detective Section Officer N.S.F. Hartley of the BSAP gave details of location of two battles. pp. 94-101

<sup>180</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.78. See Appendix 7

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. Nkosi said the accused James April was also dressed in the Rhodesian camouflage uniform during the battle.

<sup>182</sup> C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.3

Winnall explained that at 5p.m they were forming a base camp when he heard sporadic firing to his right. A sergeant major came to report to him that he had seen two guerrillas. Immediately after that the guerrillas opened heavy fire on the camp. According to Lieutenant Winnall, the platoon commander, ‘...there was chaos... I thought we were not in a good position to defend ourselves. Hand-grenades were being thrown into the camp. I thought we had lost the initiative and I ordered withdrawal.’<sup>183</sup>

Mr Rees: (the prosecutor) And what type of attacking formation did the attackers appear to adopt?

Winnall: After a while I got the impression that they were beginning to encircle us, and outflank us. At the same time with this automatic fire they were also throwing grenades into the camp, one of which exploded approximately ten paces away from me and I got a bit of shrapnel in my shoulder and my hip, and a little bit in my face.

Mr Rees: What appeared to be the morale of the attacking force? --- The morale appeared to be very high, and they were certainly very aggressive. A short way away there was someone shouting “Attack, attack, attack” and it was in the initial stages, in fact, of this attack that patrol officer Thomas was killed. In trying to get his dog under control he was shot.

What casualty was suffered by your side? ---Thomas was killed. I was not aware that anybody had been, but in fact the lance corporal in my platoon was also killed – shot in the face – and there were a number of people injured; it amounted to approximately seven.<sup>184</sup>

Winnall was so badly injured that he was airlifted to a hospital. James April referred to him as ‘the man with a thousand wounds’, convinced that Winnall exaggerated his wounds in order to receive the sympathy of the court and I quote from the trial record:

Mr Rees: (the prosecutor) What injuries did you suffer? Could you tell the court? --- [Winnall] Shrapnel wounds, bullet wounds in the calf, the left calf; a bullet wound through the left upper arm; a bullet wound across the top left thumb, and one across the top of my head.

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<sup>183</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.66

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* p.92

KENNEDY, J. (judge) You were a very lucky man to have escaped death, I must say? --- [Winnall] I think so, Sir.<sup>185</sup>

Winnall went on to say, 'I was evacuated to hospital and did not return to the area'.<sup>186</sup> Two RAR members were killed and eight wounded. Another member was killed as a result of an 'accident'. Two guerrillas were killed. With both incidents the guerrillas operated from well-built hideouts and captured some of the RAR guns and most importantly two wireless sets, which were used to monitor the movements of the security forces.<sup>187</sup>

The guerrillas decide to return the four-gallon tin in which they carried the sour milk, so as not to incriminate the old man. The latter told them not to go near the river as the Rhodesian security forces were planning an ambush. The guerrillas were very thirsty but dared not go near the river. Instead the old man showed them an alternate route. Morodi carried one of the wounded men quite a long distance.<sup>188</sup>

### **The guerrillas shoot at four black Rhodesian soldiers**

What followed was one of the curious happenings during the Wankie campaign and is best told in the exact words of Morodi:

Just as we walk – it was a full moon – we saw four black soldiers coming. And when they saw us they say, 'No! Don't kill us because we are also black.' We opened fire! We didn't waste time. We were afraid if we capture them then they are going to see our number and they are going to see how we are armed, and they may escape and give a proper report that side... Within two, three minutes, we hear firing at the river.<sup>189</sup>

The guerrillas meeting of, and shooting at the four black soldiers set off another chain of events. In the meanwhile the Rhodesian security forces had set a trap for the fleeing guerrillas at the river. They put two groups of soldiers on either side. It was planned that once the guerrillas got to the river the one group of Rhodesian soldiers would open fire, the guerrillas would retreat and the other group of Rhodesian soldiers would

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid. p.93

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. p.78 According to Nkosi, two guerrillas were killed in this skirmish and he saw two [dead] Non-Europeans on the side of the enemy.

<sup>188</sup> H. Bernstein, The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.165

advance and shoot the guerrillas from the rear. When the Rhodesian soldiers heard shots, which was the sound of the guerrillas shooting at the four black Rhodesian soldiers they thought the trap had worked. So the rear guard advanced. And the two Rhodesian groups started shooting at each other. Morodi says the shooting went on for about fifteen minutes. The guerrillas continued on their way. The next morning they listened to the radio. A report was given to Salisbury saying that an ambush had been laid and that the guerrillas had killed the commander and fifteen others. This was not true they had shot at themselves.

The next morning enemy reconnaissance was sent to the area. The guerrillas decided to evade the helicopters by resting in nearby tall trees. The guerrillas ate and cleaned their guns. In the meanwhile they sent two scouts on reconnaissance. One scout spotted the Rhodesian Security Forces and crawled towards them. He heard them discussing the battle. The Rhodesians said: 'If we can meet those people and they fight like they did yesterday...I'll run, you see'.<sup>190</sup>

The Rhodesian soldiers spotted one of the MK guerrillas and a pitched battle followed lasting an hour and a half. The guerrillas lost two men. According to Morodi, they killed a number of Rhodesians as they were close to them. The dead apparently included a brigadier from South Africa, an expert in anti-guerrilla warfare.

The brigadier had been sent straight from South Africa to Salisbury and then to the front. He died within a short while of arriving in Rhodesia. Morodi thought the guerrillas lucky as they were able to kill the commander and the radio people – seven all in all, whilst the guerrillas lost only two men.

The group walked along a donga, crossed at a certain point and were given shelter for a few days at Sithole's shop at Kabayu. Southeast of the shop the group later concealed firearms and equipment.<sup>191</sup> Hartley explained at April's trial what happened to this group which included Nkosi:

The point of engagement (point A), a clearing in the bush. After which the guerrillas worked for about 1 1/2 miles along a donga, marked B. At a spot in the Donga Marked C, some of the guerrillas hid firearms and equipment which they had seized from Security Force members.

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. p.166

<sup>191</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, p.97

A mile later they crossed the donga at point D. From point A to E is approximately 17 miles at point E they reached Sithole's shop at Gulakibile, where the group was given shelter for a few days. At point F, south east of Sithole's shop the guerrillas buried their firearms and equipment. At point G, a spot west of Sithole's store the guerrillas buried there automatic pistols and hand grenades.<sup>192</sup>

Nkosi and two others 'deserted', as they wanted to move back to South Africa. It is not clear whether Nkosi understood what 'desert' means in military terms and whether he and two others wished to make their way back to South Africa which was there destination.

After this battle the guerrilla supplies were once again running low. Lack of water forced the group to once again send out men in search of a supply. This smaller group of five men included James April and the ANC commander.

A week later, a captured guerrilla led security forces to a base where a surprise attack killed four guerrillas. The RRAF strafed the base with great success.<sup>193</sup>

A third ANC-ZAPU group making its way south, had a major clash at Tjolutjo township, which is about sixty miles from Bulawayo. It seems that fierce fighting took place on 31 August, and the South African forces were involved in the clashes.<sup>194</sup>

The group looking for water were unable to find any, and neither could they find their way back to the detachment that had been forced to move. This group of five decided to cross the border into Botswana where they buried their weapons. However, once inside Botswana the guerrillas saw the Botswana government paramilitary troops in the distance. The MK guerrillas after much discussion decided not to resist, nor to militarily engage the Botswana troops. They particularly noted that Botswana had recently gained its independence and was a member of the OAU. The MK guerrillas reasoned that the Botswana government was not the enemy of the people of South Africa. Hani explains that the Botswana paramilitary police initially pretended to be friendly but later manacled, arrested and ill-treated the guerrillas. The latter

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<sup>192</sup> See Appendices 8 & 9

<sup>193</sup> K. Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe* (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.66

<sup>194</sup> Sitrep s.n. 33

discovered that the Botswana and South African authorities were working hand in hand.<sup>195</sup>

The group denied having any arms. However, the police retraced their footsteps and found the buried cache. They were arrested and given food, after which they were transferred to Francistown. They were charged with bringing weapons of war into Botswana and with entering the country without a permit.

Further fighting was reported a few days later some 25 miles to the west of Bulawayo. Maxey says that a subsequent trial, which took place in South Africa in 1969, gives much more detail of the both engagements.<sup>196</sup>

On 4 September 1967, another clash occurred and three guerrillas were killed, one security force member was killed and one injured. It is believed that nine ANC guerrillas involved in the fighting mentioned were arrested in Botswana. One died in Botswana of wounds received in Rhodesia.

Enemy reinforcements were increasing in the area and the South African bound group now consisting of 34 men decided to retreat west, into Botswana. The guerrillas' purpose in retreating into Botswana was to refresh themselves, heal the injured, acquire food supplies and then proceed to South Africa. There was no intention of battling with the Botswana authorities. The Botswana police later arrested them and demanded that they hand over their weapons.

The guerrillas were charged and sentenced for 'bringing weapons of war into Botswana' and for 'illegal entry'. The sentences received differed. Some of the guerrillas received two years, some three years and some others even six years. After appeals the sentences were reduced.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> C. Hani, "The Wankie Campaign", @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.4

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. Maxey is referring to the trial of Daluxola Luthuli and 10 other accused, quoted Prisoners of Apartheid: a biographical list of political prisoners and banned persons in South Africa (London, IDAF with UN Centre against Apartheid, 1978) p.33

<sup>197</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The exile experience of South Africans* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1994) p.167

### **The OAU intervenes**

After serving approximately two years in the Botswana prison, the OAU intervened and the sentences were commuted. The guerrillas were released in December 1968 and they were flown to Lusaka, Zambia. In Lusaka a 'journalist', who later turned out to be a senior CIA member interviewed Morodi about the Wankie campaign. Morodi told him it was not ANC-ZAPU policy to kill civilians. In fact during the course of their march the guerrillas had met a White man and a White woman in the bush, who should not have seen them. They did not harm them, as they were civilians.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**THE ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO THE RHODESIAN**  
**AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY FORCES**

In this chapter I extracted relevant records and information from the archival documents of the Rhodesian and South African security forces, which I was able to access at the South African Defence Force Archives.

How did the Rhodesians and South Africans experience this operation? What light, if any do these archival documents shed on the Wankie campaign? What did the Rhodesians-South Africans learn from their experiences with the ANC-ZAPU guerrillas? I also examine the controversial issue of South Africa's military assistance to Rhodesia. Do the archival documents shed more light on the South African government's assistance to Rhodesia? What resources did South Africa commit to Rhodesia?

**The Rhodesians called their military action Operation NICKEL**

Operation NICKEL was the name given for the overall security force operation dealing with the Wankie campaign and covered the entire Rhodesia. The border control operations were called LETTUCE for the northeast half and ISOTOPE for the south west half.<sup>199</sup> For the names of other smaller operations please see Appendix 9.

**The Rhodesian security Situation reports**

What exactly happened during the conflict between the Rhodesian security forces and the ANC-ZAPU guerrillas? An archival file documenting the Situation Report (Sitrep) in Rhodesia sheds lights on the chronological order of events in Rhodesia. As the daily events of what unfolded is so important, and as researchers have not had access to this information before, I have documented it below so as to establish a bigger and more complete picture.<sup>200</sup> The serial number of each Situation Report has been abbreviated to Sitrep s.n. in the footnotes.

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<sup>199</sup> BGG/210/3/11 *Inligtings Rapporte Rhodesie, Volume 1*

<sup>200</sup> From *Sitrep van Rhodesie, 25 August to 15 December, Taakmag 1*, 78. This Situation Report was sent to the South African Defence Force from Mr Rawlins at the Rhodesian Embassy.

In the Sitreps codes are given for the names of places. As no key is available to the researcher, it is handicap. Nevertheless, one is able to obtain a sense of the events as they unfolded. The Western Sector is the area that the South African-bound group was moving through. The Eastern Sector is the area that the Lupane-bound group was moving through.

### **Monday, 7 August**<sup>201</sup>

#### **Western Sector**

One guerrilla was captured south of Wankie. Interrogation revealed that he was one of a gang of 6 consisting of 3 ANC and 3 ZAPU men. The ANC was heading for Johannesburg.<sup>202</sup>

### **Friday, 11 August**

#### **Western Sector**

One guerrilla was captured near Kariba.<sup>203</sup>

#### **Eastern Sector**

One guerrilla was captured on a train.<sup>204</sup>

### **Sunday, 13 August**

#### **Western Sector**

Whilst following tracks of guerrillas the Rhodesian security forces were ambushed and sustained casualties – Three were killed and three wounded. The ambush took place at Tsantada and tracking had started at Pongora.<sup>205</sup>

On a follow up at Intunehla four guerrillas were killed, one was injured who died later. Railway security guards captured one guerrilla. Interrogation revealed that the ambush on security forces on 13 August left three guerrillas dead and one wounded.

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<sup>201</sup> I have added the day of the week to the date given in the Sitreps.

<sup>202</sup> Sitrep s.n.6

<sup>203</sup> Sitrep s.n.7

<sup>204</sup> Sitrep s.n. 7

<sup>205</sup> Sitrep s.n.8

Also that 30 guerrillas had crossed on border on 31 July, the majority were South African - ANC members and were headed for South Africa.<sup>206</sup>

### **Eastern Sector**

One guerrilla was captured trying to cross back into Zambia. Three weapons were recovered from him.<sup>207</sup>

### **Wednesday, 16 August**

#### **Western Sector**

Police shot one guerrilla near Figtree.<sup>208</sup>

#### **Eastern Sector**

One guerrilla was captured. Interrogation revealed that at least nine guerrillas were returning to Zambia.<sup>209</sup>

### **Thursday, 17 August**

#### **Western Sector**

Locals reported the tracks of two guerrillas at MK850402. Further tracks of four guerrillas found at MK740180. The resting place was traced and a quantity of ammunition found at MK770103. Nine tracks were seen at MK840023.<sup>210</sup>

### **Friday, 18 August**

#### **Western Sector<sup>211</sup>**

An engagement took place with 15 guerrillas at MJ950880. Eight guerrillas were killed, six were captured and one escaped. Large quantities of ammunition and arms were captured.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Sitrep s.n.9

<sup>207</sup> Sitrep s.n.8

<sup>208</sup> Sitrep s.n.10

<sup>209</sup> Sitrep s.n.10

<sup>210</sup> Sitrep s.n.11

<sup>211</sup> This should read Eastern Sector

<sup>212</sup> Sitrep s.n.12

## **Tuesday, 22 August**

### **Western Sector**

At MJ740170 after engagement three guerrillas were killed and three wounded.

Security forces: one lieutenant killed, one warrant officer killed. The lieutenant was killed accidentally by own troops. Tracks of 30 guerrillas were seen in area.

One guerrilla was shot at MK410110.<sup>213</sup>

## **Wednesday, 23 August**

### **Western Sector**

An air strike by hunter fighters was unsuccessful. Guerrillas then attacked the security forces. Three guerrillas were killed in this engagement. One guerrilla was captured with his weapons and equipment. Security force casualties: one police officer killed, one policeman wounded, one soldier killed, one officer and six other ranks wounded. It seemed that two Chinese men and one Chinese woman led this group of guerrillas, although it was not confirmed.<sup>214</sup>

## **Thursday, 24 August**

### **Western Sector**

Three unarmed guerrillas were captured at NJ0190 - two of them were local. They belonged to the group mentioned in serial 12. Interrogation revealed the following:

- A group of 70 terrorists moved in one group east of Grand Rapids on 11 August. They split into smaller groups before crossing the Zambezi River.
- The guerrilla shot at Figtree had been sent ahead to contact a ZAPU member prior to the main group arriving.<sup>215</sup>

## **Friday, 25 August**

### **Western Sector**

Four guerrillas were captured at QM700862.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Sitrep s.n.13

<sup>214</sup> Sitrep s.n.14

<sup>215</sup> Sitrep s.n.15

## **Saturday, 26 August**

### Western Sector

One guerrilla was captured in the area mentioned above after an ambush was set. One guerrilla was found dead at MJ742175. Guerrillas are still believed to be in the area.

### Eastern Sector

Two unarmed guerrillas were captured at TR120150.<sup>217</sup>

## **27 Aug**

### Western Sector

Guerrillas may have split up. Botswana police at area NH0379 arrested four guerrillas. These guerrillas confirmed as being members of the group involved in the incident on 22 Aug.<sup>218</sup>

Gang of +- 70 crossed east of Katambora on 11 Aug 67 and split in the Wankie area. Basil February was sent ahead to rendezvous with contacts at NH850350. The ANC guerrillas would then move to the Republic of South Africa (RSA) for training. ZAPU would train locals in the area.<sup>219</sup>

The summary of guerrilla casualties for period beginning June to 29 August 1967 is in Rhodesia: (both sectors) killed 23, captured 43. In Botswana – captured 13. One person died of wounds.

Two armed guerrillas spotted by civilians at NK330020. They asked directions to MJ840070. This river junction is assumed to be rendezvous for guerrillas.<sup>220</sup>

### Eastern Sector

One ZAPU guerrilla arrested at Bindura UR230860. Possibly five guerrillas remain in the area.

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<sup>216</sup> Sitrep s.n.16

<sup>217</sup> Sitrep s.n.19

<sup>218</sup> Sitrep s.n.20

<sup>219</sup> Sitrep s.n.20

<sup>220</sup> Sitrep s.n.21

## **No date given**

### **Western Sector**

Four guerrillas arrested by Botswana police said that they had left 28 guerrillas in Rhodesia. These four were hungry and short of water. The crossing point was definitely established as 20 miles east of the termination of the Victoria Falls gorge. The guerrillas used rope on Zambian side and crossed by dugout.<sup>221</sup>

There is no truth to the report of Radio SA of 29 August that new insurgents have been involved in bloody fighting in Rhodesia. Thus far 17 guerrillas have been caught in Botswana, most of them are ANC members.

Guerrillas are following a new pattern from Rhodesia to Botswana. Weapons are buried inside or outside Botswana. Civilian clothes are bought and attempts are made to travel to South Africa via Francistown. The Botswana Police are aware of this and active patrolling is done to track the infiltrators.

## **29 Aug**

### **Eastern Sector**

Patrol stopped while two Canberra's pattern-bombed suspected area from+- MJ280020-NJ030010. Guerrillas' tracks encircle the bombed area. A follow up is continuing.

Late 29 August Botswana Police arrested four ANC guerrillas. They are possibly from group who split at MJ915030. One 'Coloured' named George Driver was with them.

All arms and equipment was dumped and civilian clothing was purchased on entering Botswana en route to South Africa.<sup>222</sup>

## **30 August**

### **Western Sector**

Tracks were followed from NK330020. Tracks were lost when guerrillas removed boots. Police checked area NK330020 to PJ095350. On 29 August in area MJ915030

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<sup>220</sup> Sitrep s.n.23

<sup>221</sup> Sitrep s.n.24

<sup>222</sup> Sitrep s.n.25

tracks of large group of guerrillas found. One set of tracks was leading towards the Botswana border while the others were going north east (approximately 20 guerrillas)

One jungle hat, packet of boxer tobacco, SOS Mag, bloodstained bandages and dressings found en route. Drag marks indicate at least one stretcher case. Found meat tins licked dry and condensed milk tubes chewed.

### **31 August**

#### **Western Sector**

ZAPU members that were captured on 30 & 31 August claim they are part of a fanatical group determined to reach South Africa. They were approximately 20 in the group. The Tegnani River is used for direction.

Five guerrillas that were spotted in Rhodesia on 31 August have now been spotted in Botswana.<sup>223</sup>

### **1 September**

#### **Western Sector**

Patrols and ambushes are continuing. Locals residing at NH070855 said four guerrillas including a Chinaman on 30/31 August approached them. They asked for food and water. The local was given R10 to buy food. A rendezvous was arranged at the same place for 19h00. The guerrillas gave their destination as NH840340. An ambush was laid. There was no contact and patrols continued south.<sup>224</sup>

### **2 September**

#### **Western Sector**

A captured guerrilla was taken to ML297173 where he thinks he crossed although he is not sure. An ambush and sweep was made at NH070885. The sweep found an empty hideout for seven guerrillas and two sets of tracks crossing into Botswana, where the police reported on a follow up.

Four guerrillas in the area of NH1080 fired on the BSAP. Guerrillas are heading on bearing 165 mag. They are moving openly and showing signs of defiance and bravado.

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<sup>223</sup> Sitrep s.n.26

<sup>224</sup> Sitrep s.n.30

Jonathan Moyo was arrested at unstated place. He was positively identified as ZAPU leader and sole survivor of 24 in first action against security forces on 13 August. It is suspected that the majority of guerrillas are now in Botswana.<sup>225</sup>

### **3 and 4 September**

#### **Western Sector**

On 3 September 12 guerrillas crossed into Botswana where police arrested six of them while the other six are being tracked. They are possibly the rest of the gang from the Nata-Tegwani Rivers area. An armed guerrilla was captured at NK850060.

The presence of Chinaman was now discounted.

On early 3 September shots was heard in area of NY130820. Locals reported tracks of five in the area. This could be five guerrillas who lost contact with first gang prior to engagement on 13 August. Tracks were heading east. Patrols continue in all areas.<sup>226</sup>

One unarmed guerrilla captured at NH090980. He had no pack. Information received that the rest of the gang was 3 miles south east of 2 CDO RLI position. Patrol from 2 CDO and D Coy RAR sent to area. Found tracks and contacted seven guerrillas at NH080977 at 12h35. Four guerrillas were killed and one 'White' soldier slightly wounded. Guerrillas were not yet identified. Suspect arrested at NH790560 and is being interrogated. The grassland between E Coy position and Tegwani River were burnt on 1 September.

Patrols continued, also ambushes on kraals and stores of suspected contacts and known sympathisers. Guerrillas are known to be listening to RBC/SABC news on transistors. Guerrilla tactics for ambushes include leaving trail then making hairpin turn to bush. Once security force troop in trail, guerrillas would follow up.<sup>227</sup>

### **4 September**

#### **Western Sector**

Three guerrillas were killed by 10 Platoon RAR at NJ200800. Rhodesian casualties: one RAR dead, one RAR wounded. Guerrillas were identified as deserters from main

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<sup>225</sup> Sitrep s.n.31

<sup>226</sup> Sitrep s.n.32



group three days after crossing. All were carrying AK47 rifles. Botswana Police arrested 10 more guerrillas on 4 September and are tracking another group of 10. Location of arrest is not known. There are security force patrols in game area and BSAP are patrolling Plumtree and Sipepa. They are also checking the area south of Plumtree.<sup>228</sup>

### **5 and 6 September**

#### Western Sector

On 3 and 4 September in Botswana at NH1575, nine guerrillas were found. Six were arrested and three escaped. Later a further three were arrested, of which one is believed to be local. The guerrilla casualties to date are Rhodesia: 29 killed and 15 captured and Botswana one died and 33 captured.<sup>229</sup>

### **6 and 7 September**

#### Western Sector

BSAP patrols continue in all rural areas including Plumtree. There is no trace of guerrillas. D Coy RAR is carrying out thorough search of area including old contact positions. Further weapons and packs recovered. Nothing to suspect there are guerrillas remaining in the area. Three suspected terrorists were seen on Zambian bank ML137208. Patrols and ambushes continue in all areas.

### **7 & 8 September**

#### Western Sector

The crossing place the night of 31 July is definitely established at LL967118.<sup>230</sup>  
The guerrilla hat found at LL973070 on 2 September was from Nickel gang.  
JOC closed 0806000 Sep 67.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Sitrep s.n.33

<sup>228</sup> Sitrep s.n.34

<sup>229</sup> Sitrep s.n.36

<sup>230</sup> Sitrep s.n.37

<sup>231</sup> Sitrep s.n.39

## **8 September**

Between 80 and 85 guerrillas entered Rhodesia. Casualties:

Killed 29

Captured 15

22 of those killed and captured were ANC. Six are not identified.<sup>232</sup>

### **Botswana casualties**

Found dead 1

Captured 33

Identified as following

25 ANC

4 ZAPU

4 PAC

### **The South African reinforcements**

Ian Smith, the Rhodesian Prime Minister invited the South African security forces into Rhodesia. His South African counter-part, Prime Minister John Vorster responded by sending members of the South African Police Force (SAPF) to assist Smith with the insurgency grouping, and so a land and air search was mounted for the guerrillas.

Maxey argues that whether it was the South African army or police that were sent to Rhodesia is academic as once the South African troops were in Rhodesia they functioned in the same capacity as the Rhodesian army would. In this regard selected personnel would be asked whether they would be prepared to be 'attached to SA police for anti-guerrilla operations in any area from the Angola to Swaziland borders. On no account is mention to be made of Rhodesia'.<sup>233</sup>

Be that as it may, the South African authorities went to great lengths to ensure that the forces in Rhodesia were South African Police and not members of the SADF. Due to diplomatic factors only police assistance was permissible. However the SAP were not

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<sup>232</sup> Sitrep s.n.40

<sup>233</sup> From *LHM/TS/615/9/2* Appendix B, p.2

trained to counter the tactics engaged by the guerrillas, and the SADF were better suited.<sup>234</sup>

Speaking at Brakpan on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1967, Prime Minister confirmed that the South African Police had been sent to assist the Rhodesian security forces with the guerrillas, 'who originally came from South Africa and were on their way back to commit terrorism'. Prime Minister Vorster placed emphasis on the fact that police had been sent and not the army and said South Africa's 'action in Rhodesia has nothing to do with the situation (UDI) which arose about two years ago'.<sup>235</sup>

The aircraft identified for the operation and first sent to Rhodesia were 3 Alouette IIIs, 6 Cessnas to be provided by army and 2 Dakotas. The aircraft had to be operated by SADF personnel attached to the SAP.<sup>236</sup>

At a meeting held on 4 September 1967 Brig Dillon told Colonel van Rensburg and Commander Swart of the basis on which Rhodesia would be assisted.

These guidelines came from a meeting between General Van den Berg (SAP) and Prime Minister Vorster.<sup>237</sup>

- The resources [to be sent to Rhodesia] should be distributed over a six-month period. The Prime Minister does not want to create the impression that the Rhodesia army is being armed.  
Before any resources are sent the Prime Minister should be informed first.
- Brig Dillon is responsible for arranging the sending and receipt of security reinforcements.
- Movement of supplies where possible should be done by train.
- The two Dakotas ready for departure should have SAP markings like SAP 200 and SAP 201 or only the numbers.
- 6 Cessnas will depart on 6 September.
- All personnel will be clothed in SAP uniforms.

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid. p.4

<sup>235</sup> M. Morris, *South African terrorism* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.42

<sup>236</sup> From *LHM/TS/615/9/2* Appendix B, p.3

<sup>237</sup> From *BGG/302/6/1 Operations War Diary, Sep 67 HQ JCF*, Annexure A, See Appendix 10

- 12 Panhard tanks could be needed and will only be sent on request.
- Gen Van den Berg will seek approval from the Prime Minister on the needs/requests of the Rhodesians.
- The Dakota that was supposed to depart on the 5 September should no longer do so.
- All South African personnel should be police except where the police cannot fulfill this role. Other personnel need to operate in police uniforms.
- 6 doctors should be redeployed. Arrangements should be made with the Surgeon General.
- The content of the letter was conveyed to different arms of the SADF.

In this section I capture the salient points of the Operations War Diary (OWD) of the Head Quarters (HQ) of the Joint Commanding Force (JCF) of the South African Defence Force.

### **1 September**

Code name Chinaman was given to operations in support of the SAP in Rhodesia.<sup>238</sup>

### **3 September**

The GOC JCF advised the HQ of the Rhodesian Royal Air Force (RRAF) that 6 Cessna aircraft, which were being supplied to the RRAF, would not be available for delivery on 4 September 1967.<sup>239</sup>

### **4 September**

Brig. Dillon (SAP) had discussions with Col. van Rensburg of this HQ on the subject of SADF support for the SAP in Rhodesia. The GOC JCF is the coordinating authority for such support.<sup>240</sup>

### **5 September**

GOC JCF advised the HQ RRAF that 6 Cessnas would arrive at Thornhill at 11h30 on 6 September 67.<sup>241</sup> The HQ JCF received minutes of a conference held at SAAF HQ

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid. s.n.1

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. s.n.3

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. s.n.4

at 14h00 on 29 August. Subject assistance to Rhodesia.<sup>242</sup> A copy of the SAP movement table is attached for historical records. The Operation was called SUPERCHARGE.<sup>243</sup>

### **6 September**

A letter was received from the Commandant-General of the SADF in terms of assistance to the SAP.<sup>244</sup>

### **7 September**

GOC JCF advised CDFA of names of SADF personnel who were seconded to the SAP for operations in Rhodesia. These were the first SADF personnel involved and their names are included for record purposes.<sup>245</sup> GOC JCF instructed C Army, CAF, CLS and SG re voucher procedure to be followed when SADF equipment is supplied to SA police.<sup>246</sup>

### **What, if any, lessons did the Rhodesians learn from the Wankie campaign?**

On 26 September the Rhodesian security forces held a debriefing session on Operation NICKEL.<sup>247</sup> The purpose of the session was to understand how the security forces could improve their COIN (Counter-Insurgency) Operations.<sup>248</sup> The different arms of the security forces were fully represented.<sup>249</sup> The Chief of Staff chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone present. He said Operation NICKEL was different and introduced many new aspects therefore the debriefing would be correspondingly bigger.

Commander of 1 Brigade, Brigadier Prentice, agreed that Operation NICKEL had been an exacting operation, which was well summed up as a 'mixture of tragedy and

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid. s.n.5

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. s.n.6, See Appendix B

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. s.n.7, See Appendix C

<sup>244</sup> Ibid. s.n.8 See Appendix D

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. s.n.9 See Appendix E. ref. BGG/127/Sep/67

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. s.n.10

<sup>247</sup> Operation NICKEL commenced for the whole of Rhodesia August 1967, See BGG/210/3/11, *Inligtings Rapportre Rhodesie, Vol 1.*

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> See Appendix 2 for a list of those present at the meeting.

success'. It is impractical to cover all the events in detail, as in the 1 Brigade log alone there are 1 800 entries.

### **The first clash between the Rhodesian security forces and the guerrillas**

The Command 1 Brigade took part in the incident, which took place at the Inyatue River on 13 August 1967. Group Captain Deall said that the Inyatue incident would have been ideal for an air strike. Captain Hoskins, agreed, but at the time the Rhodesians thought there were only five guerrillas in the area. Had he realised that there were probably at least 21 guerrillas he would have withdrawn his troops, set out stops approximately 1 000 yards away and called for an air strike.

Lieutenant Colonel Godwin, the Army representative at the JOC at that time, said orders were given to arm the Provosts that afternoon, but there had been problems in refueling. An armed helicopter was used instead. After discussions, it was agreed that though the helicopter may have caused casualties among the guerrillas, its close proximity to its own forces could have inadvertently injured them instead.

The helicopter was mainly used as a communications relay station.

### **The skirmishes between the two opposing forces lasted between 13 August and 4 September 1967**

Lieutenant Colonel Godwin gave an outline of the entire operation from the Inyatue Battle to the final contact on 4 September. After this it was assessed that all guerrillas who had crossed into Rhodesia on the night of 31 July/1 August 1967 had been accounted for either by the Rhodesian security forces or the Botswana Police. It was noted that aircraft were used extensively and that one of the Provosts completed more than 100 hours of flying.

### **Running short of ammunition**

Brigadier Coster said it was not generally understood why Lieutenant Colonel Smith's platoon ran short of ammunition in their encounter on 22 August. Lieutenant Colonel Godwin said that at the time each rifleman carried 50 rounds of ammunition most of which were carried in two magazines. The FN rifle had been newly issued and the soldiers had been to a large extent firing on automatic. This led to a high use of ammunition and the reason for the troop's withdrawal. Since then troops have been

instructed to fire the FN only on single rounds. Henceforth, only certain men such as leading scouts would be permitted to fire on automatic.

The Chief of Staff added that the MAG had formerly been considered too heavy and cumbersome to be carried on COIN operations, and for this reason the FN rifle on automatic was seen as more suitable. This had been proved wrong and the MAG had now regained popularity. Both Lieutenant Colonel Godwin and Captain Atkinson affirmed that this was the case with 1 RAR and 1 RLI and that riflemen now carried 150 rounds each.

It was recommended that the RRAF should require some form of permanent facilities at Brady Barracks both in accommodation and for communications.

### **Change in movement of fuel by Shell**

The QMG suggested that in future all movement of fuel for RRAF be handled by Shell Company to as far forward as possible and that the Army assist in moving fuel to the more inaccessible places. There had been certain confusion during Operation NICKEL with both the Army and Shell being involved in the movement of fuel.<sup>250</sup>

### **Intelligence**

Initial interrogation of guerrillas was valuable although it did not prove valuable in all cases. The ZAPU guerrillas seemed more easily broken down.<sup>251</sup> The following information was gleaned from captured guerrillas.

The Nkai group (or Lupane-bound group) consisted of 23 guerrillas and were instructed to avoid contact with security forces, if at all possible. "Their aim was to establish base camps and cells for attacks on farms and European establishments in the Gwelo area. ANC members with the group were then to travel to South Africa via Matopos with ZAPU assistance".<sup>252</sup> The Luthuli group consisted of 56 guerrillas whose final destination was South Africa. The intelligence report noted amongst other things the following about the group.

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<sup>250</sup> See BGG/210/3/11, *Intelligence Rapports Rhodesie, Vol. 1*, p. 2

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.* p.4

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* p.4

- The group's aim was to establish a base camp in the area of the Nata/Tegwani Rivers.
- Local sympathisers were to be trained and armed. Government installations in the Tjolotjo area should be attacked.
- The details of the groups plans could not be ascertained as the leader kept them to himself and evaded capture.
- The group was disciplined and members were allowed to separate from the group only on the leader's instructions.
- Each ANC guerrilla carried 20-30 pounds, whilst the ZAPU leader carried the groups cash and each ZAPU member carried only about 2 pounds each.
- The guerrillas had been instructed not to disclose the crossing point under any circumstances.
- All weapons carried were automatic or self-loading. The group also had machine guns, grenades and explosives. Each guerrilla carried about 300 rounds of ammunition.
- The Luthuli group carried a transistor radio with which they monitored new reports. They learnt about the Inyatue incident, which involved the Nkai, group. The guerrillas also carried Land Apportionment maps scale: 1: 1 000, 000 and compasses. Notwithstanding this, the smaller groups that had broken away from the Luthuli group had no idea of their whereabouts.
- Game had been shot, killed and cooked during the day whilst in the Wankie national park.
- The Coloured who was shot in the Figtree area on 16 August apparently had a separate mission from that of the Luthuli and Nkai groups.<sup>253</sup>
- The big group split into two on 9 August, just east of Wankie. No specific routes had been given for the destinations this was the responsibility of the leaders concerned.
- As far as was known the group had contacted only two civilian sympathisers since the crossing into Rhodesia.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid. p.5

<sup>254</sup> Ibid. p.6



Superintendent Bester provided the following information that was obtained from the interrogation of guerrillas.

- The group's pattern of moving mainly at night was interrupted once Operation NICKEL commenced. Sometimes the guerrillas were forced to move during the day until they found a suitable base camp.
- Their formation on the move was to have the group led by two scouts, followed by a recce group of about four men, followed in turn by the remainder of the group who moved in three single files. There was a rear guard of four to five men and two scouts on the flanks.
- When setting up base camp, the group split into sections and spread out in a circle. Sections were spaced about 10-15 feet apart. Members of the sections then dug shallow hollows for themselves. The whole position was an all round defence with sentries posted outside the circle. The guerrillas would lie under fallen tree trunks and thick foliage for protection from the air.
- All contacts except on 23 August were spontaneous and unplanned. The incident at [the] Inyatue [River] occurred whilst the group was resting.
- The attack made on Platoon 13 on 23 August was most probably an attempt to gain food and water. It was prompted by the guerrillas success the previous day and the apparent lack of sentries.
- There had been about 45 guerrillas at the Leasha Pan at the time the Mortar Platoon made contact with the two guerrillas who had been to the pan to ambush game.<sup>255</sup>
- Almost without exception the Rhodesian security forces had underestimated the number of guerrillas being followed. Commander 1 Brigade pointed out that it was better [in future] to overestimate the number of guerrillas being followed.<sup>256</sup>
- Before basing up the group split and the guerrillas would move at 90 degree angles. This would confuse troops following up, as there were several sets of tracks to follow.
- The ANC and ZAPU guerrillas had not trained together at any point. Instead they had joined two days before the crossing of the Zambezi River.

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid. p.7

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. p.8

### **Rhodesian forces**

Lieutenant Colonel Godwin said that since the Inyatue incident the policy was to have the minimum of platoon follow up on insurgent tracks. A new follow up procedure was being evolved. Most injuries incurred by the Rhodesians were as a result of standing or running.

In terms of the air strike of 23 August it was agreed that light aircraft might be more useful and the Trojan would be more capable of firing 37-mm rockets. It was agreed that it was not a good idea for a pilot to attack possible targets ahead of the ground forces unless the ground commander so favours.

### **Trackers were invaluable**

Trackers had proved invaluable and it was recommended that each battalion should have a pool of trackers. Police dogs had not been successful in tracking guerrillas, as they had not been trained for this kind of operation.<sup>257</sup>

### **Problems around encoding Situation Reports**

Some officers complained that the encoding of messages sometimes proved too time consuming. The Chief of Staff said it was agreed that only certain portions of the JOC SITREP should be encoded. Lieutenant Colonel Godwin further suggested that the nicknames for places should be standardised between the three services.

### **Media**

During Operation NICKEL there had been a lack of security at all levels of the three services. This had led to information getting out to the public causing 'bad rumours'. It should be impressed on all ranks that they should not under any circumstances discuss what took place during operations. Brigadier Prentice said that shortly after Operation NICKEL commenced there had been serious rumours in Wankie of guerrilla successes against security forces.

The Voice of America had made a false broadcast that the guerrillas had taken over the Wankie airfield and this was believed by many of the residents. It was therefore

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid. p.9

agreed that certain prominent civilians should be kept informed of operational developments, as suggested by the Provincial Commissioner, Mr Hagelthorn.<sup>258</sup>

### **Flame throwers**

It was suggested that each platoon have flame-throwers that would burn out the bush in which guerrillas were hidden. The fire itself would be demoralising to them.<sup>259</sup>

### **Napalm**

The use of Napalm had not proved effective in burning out the Mopani bush in the area of the Nata River. The future use of a defoliant would be investigated further.<sup>260</sup>

### **Casualty procedures**

All casualties occurring on 23 August, with the exception of two, took about 20 hours to reach the CCP due to difficulty with communications.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid. p. 10

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. p. 11

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. pp. 12-14

<sup>261</sup> Ibid. p. 12

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE LUTHULI DETACHMENT IN POPULAR HISTORY AND MEMORY

In this chapter I examine how, the media influenced public opinion on the Wankie campaign. I have selected clippings from *The Cape Argus*, *The Cape Times*, and *The Star* for August and September 1967. I then analyse the place of the Luthuli Detachment in popular history and memory with specific reference to the Western Cape and the story of James April and Basil February, the first armed Coloured MK soldiers who also took part in the Wankie campaign.

What, if any information did South Africans receive through their media? I examined the clippings broadly and mention the main messages, which were communicated to the public.

#### **The Star, August 15, 1967 Tuesday, p.5**

*SEVEN KILLED IN RHODESIAN GUERRILLA CLASH: Terrorist toll now 23 dead*

Five terrorists were killed and two African soldiers lost their lives in what is understood to have been one of the sharpest clashes yet between Rhodesian security forces and guerrillas in the past 20 months. Two White and one African soldier were wounded.

Last week the government announced that small groups of terrorists had infiltrated into Rhodesia from Zambia. Later it was revealed that Rhodesian aircraft dropped leaflets where it was believed the terrorists were.

Since then in the Zambezi Valley, one terrorist gave himself up as a result of the leaflet and on Friday another one was captured in the Wankie area.

A security officer operating against the terrorists said in an interview that the Rhodesian African troops were being used against the terrorists.

**Cape Argus, Aug 15, p6**

*RHODESIANS CLAIM 19 TERRORISTS*

Unconfirmed reports say that the Rhodesian security forces have killed 19 terrorists over the past 18 months, two of them in the Wankie area last week.

The Rhodesian Royal Air Force has plastered likely terrorist infiltration areas with pamphlets warning the terrorists to abandon their arms and give themselves up before they are killed.

A Rhodesian security officer revealed that the majority of African terrorists who infiltrated into Rhodesia were trained in Tanzania, Russia, and Communist China and to a lesser degree in Algeria and Cuba. There has been some dissension within the infiltration groups about money.

**The Cape Argus, Saturday 19 August, p.1 (noon edition)**

*SA Police Act to stop entry of terrorists: African group 'on the way to Transvaal'*

All possible measures were being taken by the South African Police to prevent terrorists crossing the border from Rhodesia and entering Northern Transvaal.

Rhodesian security forces had clashed with gang of terrorists making their way to South Africa. Eight terrorists were shot dead.

Brigadier Venter said there was no evidence that any terrorist had crossed the Limpopo into South Africa.

The fighting was concentrated in the Wankie-Delta area. The terrorists were Algerian trained.

**Cape Argus, Saturday, 19 August 1967, p.1**

*First eyewitness account of fighting*

*Zambezi bush hunt for terrorist fugitives*

*Aircraft, tracker dogs out*

Rhodesian soldiers and police helped by tracker dogs and spotter aircraft are still scouring the thorn bush for the fugitive elements of a gang of 30 terrorists.

The hunt for survivors of two pitched battles with security forces in remote country in the Wankie-Delta area of the Zambezi Valley goes on relentlessly.

This is the first eyewitness account of the two battles in which 22 Algerian trained terrorists have been accounted for, 14 killed and eight captured

The first clash took place in a heavily wooded valley near Inyatue, 30 miles south east of Wankie where troops of the RAR and police trackers tried to pin down the gang. After a 5 1/2 hour battle the gang slipped away under cover of darkness, leaving five men dead. Two African soldiers were also killed, two European police officers, a European army officer and an African soldier wounded.

There were no casualties among the security forces in the second battle in the same area yesterday, when eight terrorists were killed and six captured.

The rest of the gang, about 10 are believed to be in the area between Victoria Falls railway line and the Botswana border. The gang crossed the Zambezi between the Falls and Kazangula on 31 July.

It was only until 10 August that the first contact was made with security forces. A patrol arrested one man at a mission near Wankie. Last Saturday another man was arrested at Dett, but a third escaped in a stolen car. He was shot dead in a gunfight with police at Figtree, 120 miles from the Transvaal border.

The arrests sparked off intense police activity. Villagers were questioned for miles. Eventually a tracker party picked up the spoor of the terrorists. Captain Hoskins recalls how he was shot through the thigh.

**The Cape Argus, 24 August p.1**

*3 Rhodesians die in clash*

*Murderous gang hunted in bush*

A murderous game of hide and seek is going on in the thick thorn bush country of Matabeleland in western Rhodesia where security forces yesterday killed five more terrorists and captured one. The Rhodesian forces also had casualties: Three men were killed: a European officer, Lt Nicholas John Smith, was the first one White Rhodesian combatant to be killed by the terrorists, an African warrant officer (no name given) and another officer whose identity has not been disclosed.

‘Last week two African soldiers were killed in the first clash with the tough band of Algerian trained South African terrorists who were trying to make their way south to the Transvaal’.

It is apparent that a larger number of infiltrators have crossed the Zambezi than the first reports of a gang of 30. Nineteen terrorists have been killed in the past 11 days, and 18 including nine in Botswana have been captured.

Regular and territorial troops with tracker dogs and Royal Rhodesian Air Force spotter planes are operating in Matabeleland. Security Police officers have been working with them since it became known that the bulk of the latest batch of terrorists is of South African origin. The police were officially described as on a visit to Rhodesia.

Trains heading south from the Victoria Falls are being stopped and searched before they reach Bulawayo.

The press reports appear very brief and factual with little in-depth analysis. The guerrillas are uniformly described as “terrorists”, sometimes even in lurid terms such

as “infiltrator” or “murderous gang” and so forth. The spokesmen are always SADF or Rhodesian security personnel.

**What profile then, if any, did the Luthuli Detachment have in popular history and memory?**

Dr Jordan asserts that as the ANC soldiers were never able to conduct guerrilla warfare within South Africa, the impact of the Wankie campaign on the South African population cannot be considered. Although the MK soldiers fought bravely within the Rhodesian borders, this news hardly reached the ears of the local South African population.<sup>262</sup>

Among the difficulties the ANC contended with in exile was to keep the lamp of freedom burning within South Africa’s walls. The population suffered severe repression as has already been mentioned. The pass laws ruled African people’s lives and simple, normal movement within cities and between cities and rural areas were normally plagued by harassment.

In particular, the South African Security Police kept a close watch on known sympathisers of the liberation movement or associates of political activists. Many a time people’s homes were raided and sympathisers and associates were prosecuted for being in possession of ‘banned literature’.<sup>263</sup>

The ANC (and others) however found many ingenious ways to smuggle literature into the country. One of the most contested areas of the ideological war that took place between the South African State and the broad liberation movement revolved around historical interpretation. The war to win the hearts and minds of South Africans was an intrinsic part of this aspect of the struggle, although this discussion cannot be expanded upon here.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Interview with Dr Pallo Jordan, ANC Member of Parliament (Pretoria, January 1996)

<sup>263</sup> Prosecutions took place under the Publications and Film Act of 1967.

<sup>264</sup> For example see the works of Govan Mbeki, *South Africa: The peasants revolt* (London, IDAF, 1984) Edward Roux, *Time longer than rope: a history of the black man’s struggle for freedom in South Africa* (London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964) Nosipho Majeke, *The role of the missionaries in conquest* (Johannesburg, SOYA, 1952) and Mguni, *Three Hundred Years* (Cape Town, APDUSA, 1952)



The State countered any ideas, which threatened its ideological premise by *inter alia* declaring books, posters, films and other materials ‘undesirable’ through the enforcement of the Publications and Film Act of 1967. These repressive measures were constantly resisted and some people were charged and convicted of being in possession of ‘undesirable literature’. For the majority of the population, the government’s declaring certain publications ‘undesirable’ restricted their access to the ideas of the broad liberation movement.

For this reason, the role of oral history became pivotal to the ANC. Stories of heroism was constantly relayed albeit in whispered tones. The names of political prisoners such as Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, and Walter Sisulu were kept alive in the minds of people. After the June 1976 student uprising, the names of MK combatants who died in combat with the South African security forces became strong images among the youth.

In the Western Cape in the 1980s, at the height of the student and youth struggles, Basil February and James April became strong symbols of courage and bravery. Although Basil February’s name did not appear in any South African school textbook, the majority of African students, at a hostel at the University of the Western Cape, in the early 1990s, voted to name their hostel in honour of him. ‘The aura of martyrdom adds to the mystique of a person’, says Dr Jordan.<sup>265</sup> Trevor Oosterwyk, a Coloured youth activist says he first heard of the two Luthuli Detachment members when he became involved in politics. Who were these two young men whose lives had captured the imagination of young people in South Africa and in particular the Western Cape?

James April and Basil February were the first armed Coloured MK soldiers. During the politically turbulent times of the 1960s these two young men made the brave and unusual decision to join the military wing of the ANC. Both these young men had been exposed to the richness of the intellectual debates in Coloured politics, during the 1950s and early 1960s. They were particularly influenced by the Teachers

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<sup>265</sup> Interview with Pallo Jordan, ANC Member of Parliament (Cape Town, January 1996)

League of South Africa (TLSA) and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM)<sup>266</sup>, and later the South African Coloured People's Congress (SACPO). Inspired by the ideas of amongst others, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Che Guevarra, these two young men set off on a journey to transform themselves from intellectuals to freedom fighters.

In 1967, eager to fight for the liberation of the people in South Africa, they formed part of the ANC's Luthuli Detachment, on a long march home from Zambia to South Africa. Basil February fell during this Wankie campaign. He was 24 years old. James April first served 18 months in a Botswana prison and later 15 years on Robben Island for his activity as a MK soldier.

### **Basil February**

Basil February<sup>267</sup> was born on 8 August 1943, at St Monica's home in the Bo-Kaap, Cape Town. As his name suggests he was of 'Cape Coloured' descent. He was the second of four children. His father, Paul February worked as an administrative clerk and his mother Janet February (née Petersen) was a midwife. The February family was originally from Somerset West and lived in Elsie's River in the northern suburbs of Cape Town before moving to Stompneus Bay on the West Coast. Terence February, the younger brother to Basil February remembers his older sibling's early interest in the plight of workers and he would always express concern about the poor working conditions of the migrant workers at a nearby food-canning factory.

In the late 1950s February returned to Cape Town to attend Trafalgar High School in District Six. He boarded with a Mrs Van der Heyden in Athlone. The latter was the mother-in-law of February's older sister, Ursula. At high school February was a keen sportsperson and in particular enjoyed playing cricket.<sup>268</sup> At high school his political

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<sup>266</sup> The NEUM was launched in 1943 and consisted of the Anti-Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) and the All-African Convention (AAC). Both parties accepted the 10 Point Programme of minimum demands.

<sup>267</sup> In the context of Western Cape history names such as February, September and April indicate an ancestor that was once a slave.

<sup>268</sup> Marcus Solomon was a member of the Yu Chi Chan Club. He served eight years on Robben Island. Interview with Marcus Solomon (Cape Town, December 1995)

awareness grew as he came into contact with the intellectual influences of the TLSA and the NEUM.

February matriculated in 1960 with five distinctions. Although he wished to study law at the University of Cape Town (UCT), his application was refused by the then Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, Mr BJ Vorster. He subsequently enrolled at UCT's medical school. Absorbed in politics he dropped out the following year.

A number of young people including Basil participated in the discussions of the Cape Debating Society in which Kenny Jordan played a leading role. February had a close association with the Cape Peninsula Student's Union (CPSU), although he never formally joined the student structure.

The theories on guerrilla warfare and the experiences of Che Guevarra in Cuba and Mao Tse-tung in China were popularly discussed topics amongst young people. In this milieu Pallo Jordan and Basil February exchanged publications. They were both keen debaters and would spend hours discussing intellectual issues like Trotskyism.

In 1962, Basil February and James April became reacquainted at Stanley Abrahamse's house in Woodstock. From then onwards they became firm friends and were inseparable.

In 1963, February followed in the footsteps of his close friend and comrade James April and joined the South African Coloured People's Congress (SACPO). When April first joined the SACPO February scoffed at the idea of joining a 'Coloured' organisation. This was anathema to the intellectual ideas he held. Later, February, too, was convinced that the Congress Alliance held the political future of oppressed people in its hands.

As public meetings were banned, an alternative method of communication was sought. February and April decided on a slogan-painting spree in Wynberg but were caught red-handed in the act. Their two accomplices were Neville Andrews and John Fischer. Whilst April remained in custody. February, Andrews and Fischer were

charged and released on bail, due to their young age. A few weeks later, February and April were redetained.

In 1964, James April and Basil February disappeared without bidding their families and friends good bye. They feared for the safety of the people they would leave behind, and that the knowledge of their whereabouts might put family and friends into more danger with the Security Police. They secretly left Cape Town and made their way to Botswana and the training camps of the ANC in Africa and Czechoslovakia.

**What happened to Basil February, the first ‘Coloured’ MK guerrilla who fell?**

There is no certainty about the circumstances under which Basil February died. His family learnt about his demise in a very cruel way. Spyker Van Wyk , a member of the South African Security Police, almost broke down the family’s front door and announced to Mrs February, ‘Ek het net vir jou kom sê jou vark is dood’, translated this means, ‘I just came to tell you, your pig is dead’.<sup>269</sup>

According to the admittedly disputed evidence of Leonard Nkosi, the ANC-ZAPU group split into three. One was headed for northern Rhodesia and Basil February joined this group. The second group was heading for southern Rhodesia and James April was part of this group. The third group was heading for the Northern Transvaal. Basil February and James April were meant to break away from their respective groups and meet up together at a certain place in Rhodesia. They would move together to the South Western Cape where they would meet and operate their secret mission.<sup>270</sup>

Comrade Rodgers gives a detailed account of what happened. Amongst other things he says that for a while Basil February was regarded suspiciously by the ZAPU comrades because of his fair skin. “Gradually even those who thought he was white ended up seeing him as a better white”.<sup>271</sup> It was also claimed in a security Situation

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<sup>269</sup> N. Van Driel, “Basil February: the MK soldier who never made it home”, in *Cape Argus*, 26 August 1997

<sup>270</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971 p.75

<sup>271</sup> See Comrade Rodgers, “Heroes of our revolution’, in *Dawn*, (Lusaka, ANC, Souvenir issue, 1986) p. 20

Report that: “He [February] was sent ahead as contact to rendezvous with contacts at NH850350”.<sup>272</sup> Comrade Rodgers confirms the idea that February had a special mission and was therefore convinced to leave the Lupane-bound group and continue on his own.<sup>273</sup>

Some of the guerrillas accompanied February to a train siding where he boarded the train. He kept his pistol but had relinquished his UZI machine gun to his cadres. The conductor became suspicious of a White man boarding the train at a siding. He phoned the next station to alert the police. February became uncomfortable and decided to disembark at the next station where a White detective of the Security Branch and two Africans met him. The three demanded February’s identity card. The latter drew his pistol and shot at the White policeman killing him instantly. He injured both African policemen, the one seriously, as well as the stationmaster.<sup>274</sup>

February then stole a car and at a roadblock shot and killed a White policeman and managed to reach Bulawyo where he switched cars. He was intending to travel to Salisbury (now Harare) but took a wrong turn and headed for Plumtree. He died somewhere at a roadblock between Bulawyo and Plumtree.<sup>275</sup>

According to Shay and Vermaak, a guerrilla [February] had been trying to get to the Botswana border. He went to a farmhouse where a woman, her six-year old son and a house servant were present. The guerrilla forced the women to fetch him a drink of water but she managed to escape. The woman alerted the police and the guerrilla died in a gun battle on the farmhouse verandah.<sup>276</sup>

James April remembers his late friend and comrade Basil February as a gifted writer, who contributed many articles to *Dawn*, the MK journal. The words of one of his articles are so apt for his own life.

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<sup>272</sup> SITREP s.n.20

<sup>273</sup> See Comrade Rodgers, “Heroes of our revolution”, in *Dawn*, (Lusaka, ANC, Souvenir issue, 1986) p. 20

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

A revolutionary dedicates himself to the cause of a better life...  
A revolutionary loves life and he knows that life does not end when he  
himself dies.<sup>277</sup>

### **James April**

James April was born on 20 March 1940 in Bokmakerie, Athlone. His paternal family was from Genadendal, a rural area outside of Cape Town where the first Moravian missionary station was established. Runaway slaves and dispossessed Khoisan people found a place of refuge in Genadendal, which also offered the opportunity of literacy classes. April like February are both originally slave names. James April's maternal family was from Greyton, a place just outside of Genadendal. His maternal great grandfather, Thomas Driver was British and one of the earliest residents of Greyton.

James April's parents, Jacobus April and Wilhelmina Driver married in Cape Town in 1927. They had both moved from Genadendal and Greyton respectively. The April's lived in Bokmakirie from 1934 to 1974.<sup>278</sup> Bokmakire was built in the early 1930s in Athlone and was about 10 kilometers from Cape Town. It was home to a close-knit community of Coloured workers. The April's seven children were Helen, Simon, George, Frank, Monica and James. A close relationship developed between James the youngest child and his father Jacobus April who was a fervent supporter of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and the first person to stimulate his son's interest in politics.

James April attended Alexander Sinton High School in the 1950s and was influenced by members of the TLSA, as were other Coloured youth of the time. Individuals like Ben Kies, Ali Fataar and E W Erentzen came to espouse radical views on education within the TLSA.

The TLSA became a powerful organisation with branches in remote villages of the Western Cape. At its height, the TLSA embraced more than two-fifths of all Colored teachers.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> R. Shay, & C. Vermaak, *The silent war* (Rhodesia, Galaxie Press, 1971) p.51

<sup>277</sup> Article by Basil February, 'A revolutionary loves life', in *Dawn*, (Lusaka, ANC, date unknown)

<sup>278</sup> I used the original spelling. It is now spelt Bokmakierie.

<sup>279</sup> Neville Alexander, 'Non-collaboration in the Western Cape, 1943-1963', in Wilmot James and Mary Simons (eds), *The angry divide* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1989) p.184

At 16, James April attended lectures of the Cape Flats Educational Fellowship (CFEF) and the New Era Fellowship (NEF), which opened a new intellectual world to him. Topics discussed included the nature of the class struggle in South Africa. It was at CFEF that he met a number of people including Hosea and Beatty Jaffe, Bill Bartman, Cosmo Pietersen and Dr Mureson. April spent a number of years working within the structures of the NEUM namely the Gleemoor Civic Association (GCA) and the Athlone Parent Teacher Association (PTA). At the age of 18 he became the youngest member of the GCA executive.

In 1958 the GCA supported the NEUM's boycott campaign of the separate parliamentary elections. The nationalist party government removed Coloureds from the voters roll. In its place Coloureds were incorporated under the Separate Representation Voters Roll and four Whites represented them in Parliament. The Congress of Democrats (COD) put forward a candidate in the Western Cape with the support of the SACPO.<sup>280</sup> The NEUM's boycott campaign was a resounding success and as a result the Anti-CAD in the Western Cape reached its zenith and occupied an influential position amongst Coloureds.

April's intellectual development within the NEUM grew and he came to question and criticise the attitudes of the NEUM leadership, particularly in relation to the ANC leadership. After the successful mass campaigns of the 1950s, the ANC had become a mass-based organisation. The reverse was happening to the NEUM, which was becoming more elitist and more removed from the everyday struggles of ordinary people. The tide in the liberation movement was turning in favour of the ANC. April found the very Marxist/Trotskyist ideas he had embraced through his association with the NEUM, were becoming irreconcilable with the direction of the organisation.

Between 1958 and 1959 April read for a Bachelor of Arts degree at UCT. He focused more on his political work and by 1960 had dropped his studies. In 1959 the NEUM alliance split and the Anti-CAD and the AAC followed separate paths. The split was

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<sup>280</sup> Some SACPO members supported the call to boycott the elections and opposed the decision to support the COD's participation, N. Van Driel, *The journey to Wankie: The story of a 'Coloured' MK soldier*, Unpublished History Honours essay, UWC, Bellville, 1991

preceded by controversy centred on point 7 of the 10 Point programme and referred to the redivision of the land. April favoured the Jaffe/Kies faction, which sounded more radical on the debate as opposed to I.B. Tabata's faction.

The 1960 State of Emergency and its repression had a profound effect on everyone in the liberation fold including April. His hometown Bokmakirie was some four kilometres from Langa where the police shootings had taken place on 21 March 1960. Residents of Langa and Nyanga went on strike to protest police brutality. By 2 April 1960, the police, army and navy had cordoned off the two townships and used brutality to break the strike.

The Anti-CAD did not assist the people of Langa and Nyanga. The SACPO did not have a following amongst Coloureds, which the Anti-CAD had. Instead the latter issued a pamphlet calling the PAC's anti-pass law campaign 'adventurism'.<sup>281</sup> Splinter groups of disenchanted NEUM youth emerged in the post-Sharpeville era. April joined the SACPO's boycott campaign against the proclamation of a republic on 31 May 1961. SACPO's hard work was rewarded when a large number of Coloured workers joined the three-day strike. In 1963, notwithstanding April's reservation of an exclusively Coloured organisation he eventually joined SACPO convinced that the Congress Alliance held the future of the liberation movement in its hands. He then worked with Alex and Blanche le Guma, Isaiah Steyn, Reggie September, Barney Desai, Achmat Osman and Cardiff Marney.

In 1964, following April and February's charges of sabotage the two decided to leave the country and join the ANC in exile. They travelled to Johannesburg and from there they crossed the Botswana border on foot with the help of a guide and without any travel documents.<sup>282</sup>

They travelled via Zambia to Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania where they stayed for a month at the ANC's Luthuli training camp. All the inmates were confined to the training

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<sup>281</sup> The NEUM pamphlet was entitled, The PAC adventurism in retrospect (details unknown)

<sup>282</sup> N Van Driel, 1990, Honours (History), University of the Western Cape, p.23



camp as South African spies and agents frequented African countries especially those giving sanction and protection to South African liberation movements.<sup>283</sup>

In June 1964, April and February went to Czechoslovakia where they attended classes at a military academy until May 1965. The calibre of the military officials at the academy was high and they were well versed in Marxist ideology. Some of the officers were excellent philosophers and political writers. February was twenty-two years old and impressed the Czechoslovakians with his knowledge of Marxist theory.<sup>284</sup>

The period April and February spent in Czechoslovakia was a time of debate for that country's people. Everyone was discussing the ways in which socialism could be improved. From the layperson to the hierarchy of the communist party, there was recognition of a need for change. It was acknowledged by all that power had to be decentralised and Czechoslovakian society restructured. It was that era of liberal thinking, which later led to the 'Prague Spring' of 1968.<sup>285</sup>

Soon it was May 1965, and April and February returned to Dar-es-Salaam and went to the ANC camp in Kongwa. They were then transferred to Zambia in February 1966. A year dragged on in the Zambian training camp. The soldiers were getting restless and tired of training with no possibility of combat when the joint ANC-ZAPU operation happened.<sup>286</sup>

After the Wankie campaign James April served 18 months in a Botswana prison along with Chris Hani and the other Luthuli Detachment members. In 1970 he returned to South Africa to continue underground work. He was arrested in Durban in 1971 and convicted on three counts of terrorism. In his statement from the dock April said:

Whenever people are in despair, they resort to violence. Violence becomes an act of hope. History shows repeated examples of people struggling and fighting for freedom. Most people in the world today are struggling for freedom, and even in the most stable societies, there

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

are strikes and violence. You must realise that these people will not tolerate Apartheid.

The ANC is a great movement. It is the spirit of the African people. As long as you do not satisfy the aspirations of the African people you will never crush the ANC, in spite of the fascist Security Police.

When I returned to South Africa, I was tired and played out. This led to my capture. I wish to stress that it was this, and not the ingenuity of the Security Police that led to my arrest.

During my interrogation by the Security Police, I was kept in solitary confinement and beaten up. Even though I answered many of their questions, there was nothing to please them. This once again proved to me that there are fascist thugs in the Security Police.

Solutions to South Africa's problems can truly be found but only on a democratic basis, and not on a democracy imposed on a majority by a minority, which has within it a secret Broederbond fascist society.

You whites must realise that eventually you will have to stay in South Africa. You may find that even South Africa will become too small for you. You will have a rough time for the next few years. The prospects for the ANC too are grim, but time is on our side, I guarantee it. Change will take place in our favour: even if there is a world war.

The African people will be victors over the fascist South African Government. Inevitably, we shall overcome.

I did these things because I believed I was right. I am still prepared to face the consequences of my actions.<sup>287</sup>

Both April and February received medals for bravery from Nelson Mandela, Supreme Commander of MK at the last rally held by the organisation before its dissolution in December 1993.<sup>288</sup>

Notwithstanding the criticism levelled at the Wankie campaign, nor the fact that only one of its combatants made it to their destined South African soil, the names of Basil February and Chris Hani were to inspire generations of future youth.

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<sup>287</sup> Quoted in M. Benson (ed), THE SUN WILL RISE: statements from the dock by Southern African political prisoners (London, IDAF, 1981) pp.57-8. For the complete version of the speech see *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971, pp. a-h

The Luthuli Detachment has a special place in popular ANC history. Significantly, at the funeral of Graham Morodi, General Andrew Masondo had this to say:

The Luthuli Detachment was the foundation of Umkhonto we Sizwe.  
The Luthuli Detachment was the inspiration of Umkhonto we Sizwe.  
The Luthuli Detachment was the generator of Umkhonto we Sizwe.<sup>289</sup>

Oliver Tambo, contextualised the place of the Luthuli Detachment, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MK.

Let us, on this occasion, salute the Luthuli Detachment whose members lie buried in many countries, whose members languish in prison and whose members even today serve in our front ranks. If the revolution survived those dark days, it survived to a significant extent because of our Luthuli Detachment.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> See Appendices 11 & 12 for a copy of the posthumous commendation and a poster that was issued in the Western Cape in the 1980s.

<sup>289</sup> Lieutenant-General Masondo speaking at the funeral of Brigadier Alpheus Madiba, a Luthuli Detachment combatant on 16 November 1996 in Pretoria.

<sup>290</sup> 'UMKHONTO WE SIZWE – BORN OF THE PEOPLE', Statement issued by O.R Tambo on behalf of the National Executive Committee of the ANC on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, December 16, 1986.

## CONCLUSION

### **Casualties**

There are different accounts of the number of casualties sustained by the Rhodesian security forces and the ANC-ZAPU guerrillas respectively. For the fatalities suffered by the Rhodesians I accessed the Rhodesian Roll of Honour whose statistics I accept as accurate, with the exception of one date.<sup>291</sup> The roll does not include statistics around the injured Rhodesians or the names of the South African security forces that were killed in Rhodesia.<sup>292</sup> Eight members of the Rhodesian security forces were killed during the time of the Wankie campaign and 15 were wounded.<sup>293</sup> The names of the deceased are as follows:

#### **13 August 1967**

1. Davison, Acting/Corporal, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound
  
2. Karoni, Private, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound

#### **22 August 1967**

3. Pierson, K., Lieutenant, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound in a contact
  
4. Smith, N.J., Lieutenant, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound in a contact
  
5. Timitiya, WO2, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound in a contact

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<sup>291</sup> <http://www.mazoe.com/rohchr.html>. The authors do not claim the roll is complete.

<sup>292</sup> J.K. Celliers, Counter-insurgency in Rhodesia (London, Biddles Ltd, 1985) p.9

Celliers says the first member of the South African Police deployed in Rhodesia also died then.

<sup>293</sup> M. Horrell, A survey of race relations (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1967) p.66

### **23 August 1967**

6. Cosmas, Corporal, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound in a contact

7. Thomas, S.T.M., Patrol Officer, British South Africa Police, Dog Section, killed in action

### **24 September 1967**

8. Nyika, Private, First Battalion, Rhodesian African Rifles, killed in action by a gunshot wound in a contact, 24 September 1967. Although the date is 24 September, I am convinced this is meant to be 4 September, and is supported from the situation report as follows.

### **4 September**

#### **Western Sector**

Three guerrillas were killed by 10 Platoon RAR at NJ200800. Rhodesian casualties: One RAR dead, one RAR wounded. The guerrillas were identified as deserters from the main group three days after the crossing. All were carrying AK rifles.<sup>294</sup>

### **What happened to the 80 members of the Luthuli Detachment?**

In accounting for what happened to the 80 guerrillas the Rhodesian statistics on 8 September 1967 were as follows: Thirty of the joint ANC-ZAPU unit died: 29 in Rhodesia and one in Botswana. Of the 30 who died 25 were ANC members and one assumes the other five were ZAPU members. Of the 44 imprisoned, 15 were in Rhodesia and 29 in Botswana. In addition four PAC members were also imprisoned in Botswana.<sup>295</sup>

In the course of my research I have accepted the statistics released by the ANC in its submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of the Luthuli Detachment members who died. The names of the ZAPU members who died are not

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<sup>294</sup> Sitrep s.n.34

<sup>295</sup> Sitrep s.n.40

available. The ANC lists the names of 25 guerrillas who died during the Wankie campaign and are as follows:

**ZIMBABWE - WANKIE 1967** <sup>296</sup>

**1st Battle: 13/8/67 RECONNAISSANCE**

- 1 State
- 2 February, Basil (Paul Peterson) \*[Should actually read 16 August 1967]
- 3 Makgotsi, Jones
- 4 Mampuru, Christopher
- 5 Maseko, Don Donga - Died later of kidney problems
- 6 Masemeni, James
- 7 Mhlongo, John - Injured left with Zapu died later
- 8 Modumo, Ernest (Steven Maelebyane)
- 9 Motsepe, Andries
- 10 Sharp, Alfred
- 11 Sibanyoni, Delmas

**2nd Battle 21/8/67** \*[Should actually read 22 August 1967]

- 12 Baloi, Robert
- 13 Masipa, Barry
- 14 Moloi, Sparks
- 15 Setsoba, Charles (Jack Simelane)

**3rd Battle 22/8/67** \*[Should actually read 23 August 1967]

- 16 Donda (from Natal)
- 17 Mahamba, Sparks
- 18 Mhambi, Charles (Rhodes Msuntu Ngamela)
- 19 Nduna, Eric

**WANKIE: 1967 (UNKNOWN BATTLE)**

- 20 Donga
- 21 Mbali, Jackson

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<sup>296</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/deathlst.html> \* Denotes my comments.

22 Ndlovu, Joseph Spoe

23 Nduku, Knox

24 Nondulo, Ernest

25 Theo, Mkhaliphi

This accounts for 74 members of the 80 men. What happened to the other six? Some of the infiltrators managed to escape back into Zambia, others made it to Swaziland, while one managed to make it back to South Africa and was later arrested.

#### **ANC-ZAPU men convicted in Rhodesia**

Following the Wankie campaign, during September 1967, nine of the guerrillas were convicted in Bulawayo of contravening the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act by possessing offensive weapons and materials. The leader was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and the rest were jailed for periods from 10 to 14 years.

Early in November 1967, seven guerrillas appeared in the Salisbury High Court. Two were ANC members and five were ZAPU members. The seven were identified as part of the Lupane-bound group who participated in the Battle of Inyatue on 13 August 1967. Two ANC members gave evidence for the crown although they were not present during the fighting. These two admitted receiving training in Moscow and Algeria. All accused were sentenced to death for the murder of two policemen and illegal possession of weapons and explosives.

Later the same month another seven infiltrators were sentenced to death. They had been captured after two engagements in August during which four security force members were killed and eight guerrillas killed.<sup>297</sup> All the ANC members convicted in Rhodesia as a result of their participation in the Wankie campaign were released on the eve of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> M. Horrell, A survey of race relations (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1967) p.68

### **The ANC Chief of Staff becomes an askari**

The ANC Chief of Staff was Leonard Derrick Nkosi who managed to travel to Durban. He wrote to the ANC in Lusaka, Zambia and to some of the Luthuli Detachment members in the Botswana prisoner saying he had reached home. The SA Security Police, who were working hand in hand with the Botswana authorities, intercepted the letter and subsequently arrested Nkosi. At the trial of James April, in which Nkosi was a state witness he admitted taking Captain Stadler and section officers of the Rhodesian security police to identify from a helicopter where the fighting had taken place, where arms had been hidden [by the guerrillas] and various other spots.<sup>299</sup> This is what happened to Nkosi after the 23 August battle:

Mr Rees: (The prosecutor) No. M'Lord, he went back to the republic, finally. I don't want to lead all the evidence.

KENNEDY, J.: (The judge) I just wanted to know what the link was, how he came back: Now I know that he deserted and he gave certain information. You deserted, and then did you make your way back to South Africa? ---Yes.

Did you go up, later, by helicopter? ---Yes.

And you indicated what? --- Where we had the fight, and where we had hidden our firearms.

Mr Rees: Did you point out, also, to them the donga along which you and the other members of your group had walked shortly after this engagement? ---Yes.

And the spot in the donga where you and others crossed after this engagement? ---Yes.

And the place where you were given shelter, subsequently? ---Yes.

And the place where you concealed your firearms? ---Yes.

And did you also subsequently point out to Mr Hartley (a member of the South African security Police) your own particular firearm? ---Yes, I did.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Interview with James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

<sup>299</sup> *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71 10 –15 May 1971 p.79

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.* pp.79-80



Once Nkosi became an askari it was said he developed a reputation of ‘viciousness’ towards ANC cadres. It seems he might have felt betrayed by the ANC, although it was his own doing which led to his arrest. Unknown assailants in Natal in the 1980s subsequently assassinated Nkosi.<sup>301</sup>

How then do we assess the Wankie campaign? It may be useful to utilise Howard Barrell’s approach to MK with the three questions he posed.

### **What did the ANC and MK think was necessary and possible in 1967?**

The joint action drew sharp criticism from both the PAC and ZAPU. A PAC pamphlet entitled, ‘The Wankie fiasco in retrospect’ said *inter alia*,

You cannot hope to gobble up a regular army, all at once in a conventional style war, as our brothers tried to do, and still claim to be waging guerrilla warfare.<sup>302</sup>

The PAC found the ANC’s actions wholly unacceptable in theory and practice. Although once the news of the Luthuli Detachment hit the international press the PAC also attempted to infiltrate a small group of its members into South Africa via Rhodesia. These few PAC members spent time in goal with the Luthuli detachment members in Botswana in 1967.

ZANU’s official publication, *Zimbabwe News*, observed in September that if the ANC wanted to help the struggle in Zimbabwe it should fight at home, and not in Rhodesia, thereby dividing the enemy forces, and not in Rhodesia, which had led to a concentration of forces.

Both the PAC and ZANU were breakaway groups from the ANC and ZAPU respectively. Some writers described their criticism as sour grapes as the Wankie campaign overshadowed the other two movements. The reasons for the PAC’s and ZANU’s criticism could be linked to the fact that both these movements received the bulk of their support from China and therefore supported the Maoist approach to

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<sup>301</sup> Interview with James April (Cape Town, September 1990)

<sup>302</sup> D Martin and P Johnson, *The struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981) p.10

guerrilla warfare. This was different from the theories of the Soviet Union, which supported both the ANC and ZAPU.

Pallo Jordan argues that no one could fault the plan of the Wankie campaign, which to a great extent depended on the political strength of the Zimbabwean movement. The route to South Africa via Rhodesia was the ANC's only viable means to return home.<sup>303</sup>

### **How well did the Luthuli Detachment carry out the task they set themselves?**

Lodge argues that despite the sophistication of the guerrillas' equipment and their military competence, they were poorly prepared for their journey. The planners of the campaign had badly underestimated the time it would take to cross Rhodesia; the guerrillas ran out of food and lost their way through inaccurate maps. Scouts spotted both the South African bound and the Lupane-bound group.<sup>304</sup>

There is no doubt that the Luthuli Detachment fought bravely. Venter says this,

- The guerrillas fought until their ammunition was exhausted and most of their colleagues killed. A handful were taken prisoner but only because they had nothing more to fight with. Few surrendered voluntarily.
- Afterwards the Rhodesians commented on the groups determination and in particular Basil February's bravery in the face of tremendous odds
- Nor did the [Rhodesian] government security forces come out of the fray unscathed.<sup>305</sup>

Morris says 'the tactical skill and other attributes of the group showed clearly that they were vastly better trained, much tougher and more adequately equipped and armed...' than previous groups.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Interview Dr Pallo Jordan (Pretoria, January 1996)

<sup>304</sup> T. Lodge, Black politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.296

<sup>305</sup> A. J. Venter, The Zambezi salient: Conflict in Southern Africa (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1974) pp.77-78

<sup>306</sup> M. Morris, South African terrorism (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.41

**What actions can we now say were necessary and possible in any phase for the ANC and MK to have made progress?** <sup>307</sup>

Astrow argues that the joint ANC-ZAPU campaign was a complete fiasco, with most of the contingent destroyed. He claims that the Wankie campaign (and the two other incursions that followed) was virtually suicidal.

Astrow's main criticism is that the Zimbabwean nationalist parties were operating from exile and had practically no organizational infrastructure left inside the country in the immediate post-UDI period and the essential groundwork for guerrilla warfare had not been done. He maintains that the nationalist leaders embarked on the Rhodesian incursions to maintain credibility in the eyes of the African people, especially after the heavy defeats of the UDI period. <sup>308</sup>

According to Astrow 'despite the total defeats of the ZAPU-ANC (SA) incursions one observer pointed out that ANC spokesmen throughout the world, and their friends, hailed the Wankie disaster as a "victory". <sup>309</sup>

Astrow continues by saying that when the truth emerged about these episodes it helped to further isolate the exiled nationalists from the African masses, and also to highlight the problems facing both ZANU and ZAPU. In the long run the Rhodesian incursions had retarded the struggle for liberation. <sup>310</sup>

Jordan asserts that the success of the Wankie campaign to a large extent depended on the strength of the liberation movement in Rhodesian. The ANC-ZAPU strategy of insurgency was based on the premise that people had been mobilised on the ground and the military action of the unit would be given impetus by the political support of black Rhodesians. Alas, it would appear that ZAPU had overestimated the level of support it enjoyed inside the country. <sup>311</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> H. Barrell, *MK: the ANC's armed struggle*, (London, Penguin books, 1990) p.1

<sup>308</sup> A. Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A revolution that lost its way* (London, Zed Press, 1983) p.40

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

### **An international diplomatic wrangle erupts**

On 29 August 1967 Zambia protested to the Commonwealth office, condemning the presence of the South African security forces in Rhodesia and requested Britain 'not only to repulse the invaders (a reference to the SAP) but to quell the rebellion. Britain was requested to militarily intervene. The Zambians further suggested that the true reason for the South Africa paramilitary presence in Rhodesia was to keep Smith in power.'<sup>312</sup>

On 5 September 1967 Kaunda's office announced that the Zambian Army would mount patrols along the borders with Rhodesia to 'allay the fears of border inhabitants who felt endangered by the increased Rhodesian and South African Security presence in the border area.'<sup>313</sup>

The British Foreign Office responded on 11 September 1967 by issuing an official statement saying amongst other things that 'no foreign security forces have the right to enter or operate there without the consent of her majesty's government'.

The British government launched a formal protest with the South African government against the presence of the South African Police in Rhodesia on 14 September 1967.<sup>314</sup>

President Kaunda summoned the Acting British High Commissioner in Lusaka, Geoffrey Crossley, on 25 September 1967 and lodged a strong protest against 'Rhodesian violations of Zambian airspace and territorial integrity'.

In December 1967, five South African security men, who were first sent to into Rhodesia in August 'were off-duty and inadvertently, while sight-seeing, wandered across the center-line painted on the bridge, which denotes the border'. The men were arrested and a diplomatic wrangle took place. President Kaunda insisted that the South Africans were members of their country's army and not its police service.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> M. Morris, South African terrorism (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.41

<sup>313</sup> Ibid. p.43

<sup>314</sup> Ibid. p.44

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

### **The Sipolilo campaign**

The ZAPU dominated unit had considerable success in its initial attempts to mobilise villagers, according to Duka.<sup>316</sup> Lodge argues that this reception must have given impetus to the second ANC-ZAPU incursion into Rhodesia in December 1967.<sup>317</sup>

This second incursion consisted of a larger group under ANC command. This unit remained undetected for 3 months from December 1967 until March 1968. Fierce fighting between the guerrillas and the Rhodesians took place between March and June of 1968. The Rhodesians claimed to have killed 55 insurgents and to have captured many more.

A third ANC-ZAPU incursion took place in July 1968 and the guerrillas allegedly attacked a Rhodesian army camp. By now the South African security reinforcements were firmly part of the Rhodesian security forces, unlike during the Wankie campaign. This time the ANC guerrillas got to fight the South African police.<sup>318</sup>

### **Rhodesia increase its national service after the Wankie campaign**

After the Wankie campaign the Rhodesian government needed more manpower for its army. In 1966, compulsory conscription or 'peace training' as it was termed increased from 137 to 245 days. At the end of 1970 it was decided that males between 18 and 25 years, whether alien or not could be called up. National service took the form of four and a half months training and the rest of the time was spent on operational duties in the bush. In 1972, the Defence Act was passed and the Rhodesian regime increased national training from 245 to 365 days.<sup>319</sup>

### **Consequential South African involvement**

In the ensuing years the Republic of South Africa became increasingly more involved with the security situation of its northern border. The South African troops rested, trained, and re-equipped themselves in South Africa before returning to Rhodesia. Maxey says 2 000 – 3 000 South African security personnel were present in Rhodesia

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<sup>316</sup> B. C. Richmond, From Shantytown to forest, the story of Norman Duka (London, LSM Information Centre, 1974) pp. 92-94

<sup>317</sup> T. Lodge, Black politics in South Africa since 1945, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.299

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> K. Maxey, The fight for Zimbabwe (London, Rex Collings, 1975) p.36

in 1975. He further estimates that the South African contingent was at least equal in total size to the Rhodesian regular army. In 1968, the SA government had budgeted an extra 730 000 pounds for reinforcements in Rhodesia: of this 250 000 was for subsistence, 467 000 for motor transport and 8 000 for the motor boats patrolling the Zambezi River. The Daily telegraph reported that in September 1967 that the South Africans had brought four Alouette helicopters and two spotter aircraft with them.<sup>320</sup> According to Maxey, one of the spotter aircraft, a Cessna crashed near Gwelo in July 1969.

### **White co-operation in Southern Africa**

It is certain that the Wankie Campaign prompted the forging of a good military co-operation among the ruling White powers in Southern Africa. The presence of the South African security forces in Rhodesia served to solidify this co-operation. This good working relationship between SA, Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonial authorities lasted until the coup in Portugal in 1974. Some examples of this cooperation can be gleaned from the Operations War Diary (OWD).<sup>321</sup>

### **13 September**

Genl Pina C Army Staff, Portugal replied to a letter from Lt genl CA Fraser C Army SADF and submitted a memorandum of equipment that the RSA could help Portugal with. The equipment would be on lending lease basis. Pina offered FN rifles to South Africa.<sup>322</sup>

### **15 September**

Brig Dillon (SAP) visited HQ JCF and passed on the information contained in the attached minute.<sup>323</sup>

### **19 September**

GOC JCF wrote to Surgeon General about medical support for Op Chinaman.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> M. Morris, South African terrorism (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.42

<sup>321</sup> Operations War Diary

<sup>322</sup> Ibid. s.n 11 See Appendix F

<sup>323</sup> Ibid. s.n.12 See Appendix G

<sup>324</sup> Ibid. s.n.14 See Appendix H.

### **21 September**

SG wrote to GOC JCF about medical support for Op Chinaman.<sup>325</sup>

The memo on RSA/Portugal co-operation drafted by Lt Genl Fraser, C Army and Genl Pina had to be ratified by the respective governments. A copy was sent to the Dept of Foreign Affairs. There was a delay and Genl Pina who urgently needed RSA support was worried. He expressed his views to the military attache in Lisbon who wrote a personal letter to Lt Genl Fraser.<sup>326</sup>

### **22 September**

Lt Genl Fraser wrote to genl Pina to inform him that the dept. of Foreign Affairs was in the process of studying their joint memorandum on SADF/PAF cooperation.<sup>327</sup>

### **25 September**

Brig. Dillon submitted a written request for a weekly shuttle between Pretoria, Katima Mulilo, Victoria Falls and Rhodesia to support the SAP there. Dillon also mentioned that the Prime Minister had consented to the SAAF aircraft bearing Air Force markings when employed on transport support.<sup>328</sup> GOC JCF approved this request and asked CAF to initiate this service.<sup>329</sup>

### **26 September**

GOC JCF requested CAF to make radio operations available to the SAP in Rhodesia.<sup>330</sup>

### **27 September**

GOC JCF requested CDS to confirm that SAAF transport aircraft in support of the SAP in Rhodesia could fly under SAAF colours and the crews could wear SAAF uniform.<sup>331</sup> A meeting was held at HQ JCF to determine progress iro operations on SWA and Rhodesia.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid. s.n.15 Reply is Appendix J

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. s.n.16 Extract of letter is Appendix K

<sup>327</sup> Ibid. s.n.18

<sup>328</sup> Ibid. s.n.19 See Appendix L

<sup>329</sup> Ibid. s.n.20 Appendix M

<sup>330</sup> Ibid. s.n.21

<sup>331</sup> Ibid. s.n.23

<sup>332</sup> Ibid. A copy of the minutes is attached. See Appendix O

## **28 September**

GOC JCF wrote to the CDS in support of a SAP request for teleprinters that were required to establish a direct link between the security forces in Rhodesia and the SAP.<sup>333</sup>

### **Voluntary police corps for South Africa**

The then South African Minister of Police said that a volunteer police corps was to gradually take over all duties along the South African and Rhodesian borders. These volunteer policemen would receive extra benefits. The reason given: that 'the fight against terrorism in Rhodesia was becoming a matter of conventional warfare, (and) the service given by South African policemen took place under highly dangerous conditions.'<sup>334</sup>

### **What impact did the Wankie campaign have on the ANC?**

Dissatisfaction in the Umkhonto we Sizwe training camps in Tanzania, arose partly from the Zimbabwean campaigns, and helped to bring about the first major ANC conference since the Lobatsi meeting in Botswana in 1962. As a result a number of organisational reforms were introduced.<sup>335</sup>

### **Morogoro Conference**

The Morogoro Conference in Tanzania in 1969 was the first ANC conference held outside of the country. The Robben Island leadership sanctioned the conference. It is said that the conference was O.R Tambo's constructive way of dealing with the criticism of guerrillas who wished to return home.<sup>336</sup>

Jordan contends that the Wankie campaign highlighted the need for the ANC leadership in exile to work on reconstructing an internal underground structure. This fact was addressed at the Morogoro Conference, yet was not resolved until the early 1970s. Jordan recalls that James April was sent into the country at the beginning of 1970, in order to build an underground movement. It was only a matter of time

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid. s.n.25

<sup>334</sup> M. Morris, *South African terrorism* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.42

<sup>335</sup> T. Lodge, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986) p.296

<sup>336</sup> Oliver Tambo: his Life and Legacy, p.7 @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/tambo.htm](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/or/tambo.htm)



before he was caught. Chris Hani was likewise sent into South Africa and was forced to retreat into Lesotho.

The ANC's armed involvement in Rhodesia paved the way for a broader alliance of the liberation movements in Southern Africa.<sup>337</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that from a military point of view, there is no unanimity regarding the efficacy of the Luthuli Detachment. While writers like Astrow, Lodge, McKinley and others emphasise its overall military failure and destruction others, including ANC commentators, stress its role in morale-building and publicising the movement. Although Chris Hani's declaration that "I want to emphasise the question of victory because the Luthuli Detachment was never defeated in battle",<sup>338</sup> perhaps overstates its military achievement. It does suggest an important kernel of truth, namely, that the Wankie campaign was despite its seemingly ignominious end, a turning point in the armed struggle.

The dispatch of the Luthuli detachment signaled the determination of the ANC to mount a guerrilla war in South Africa. That the guerrilla thrust was defeated by Rhodesian forces reinforced by South African combat police, spotter aircraft, helicopters and armoured cars, in no way nullifies its importance in formulating ANC strategy. The mission showed the extraordinary difficulty in establishing routes into South Africa, whose borders remained shielded by the Portuguese colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique, by the Rhodesian regime and by South Africa's occupation of South West Africa (Namibia). Henceforth, it could only have become clear to ANC strategists that popular mobilisation *within* South Africa was critical for the sustenance of guerrilla activity. Given severe police restriction, the isolation of centres of support, and political and economic repression, it was obvious that it would be a long and difficult process.

Still the Luthuli Detachment firmly established a sound cooperation with other regional liberation movements like ZAPU and reinforced a sense of unity among the oppressed Black peoples of Southern Africa.

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<sup>337</sup> F. Meli, A history of the ANC: South Africa belongs to us (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988) p.162

The Wankie campaign caused international ripples. As *The Times of London*, correctly argued, the Wankie guerrillas had ‘changed the military map of Africa by bringing South African Security Forces openly into Rhodesia’.<sup>339</sup> This had important international ramifications. On 14 September 1967 Britain formally protested about the South African presence in a note to the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr H Muller.<sup>340</sup> A week later, Harold Wilson’s government officially informed Zambia of the protest and requested an assurance that the Zambian Government was not affording support to armed incursions into Rhodesia. For its part, the Smith Government in Rhodesia reacted with anger to the Wankie incursion. Significantly on 19 September 1967, the Rhodesian Parliament passed the law and order (Maintenance) Amendment bill, which made mandatory the death sentence on any person, convicted of possessing arms of war.<sup>341</sup>

With all the growing complications, South Africa continued to implement its brutal apartheid policy, confident of its inviolability. With the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire in the 1970s, the strategic façade of ‘White’ invulnerability in Southern Africa cracked wide open. South Africa’s borders became accessible and for young Black South Africans, especially after the Soweto uprising of 1976, the ANC provided a ready military and political instrument. The ANC could offer a younger generation a lengthy tradition of historical resistance. The Luthuli Detachment and its role in the Wankie campaign was an important part of this memory, and for this reason, deserves to be recorded and commemorated.

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<sup>338</sup> C. Hani, “The Wankie Campaign”, @ [www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk/wankie/html), p.3

<sup>339</sup> M. Morris, *South African terrorism* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1971) p.42

<sup>340</sup> M.C. White, *Smith of Rhodesia* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1978) p.57

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

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*LHM/TS/615/9/2 Appendix B*

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Oral testimonies and the politics of armed conflict in  
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The ANC list of members who died in exile

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/deathlst.html>

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1**

List of the Luthuli Detachment members, compiled with the author and the assistance of James April and Edwin Dlamini who were both members of the unit.

### **Appendix 2**

*Rhodesian Debriefs BGG 210/3/11/2 Vol. 1.*

### **Appendix 3**

*BGG/210/3/11 Inligtings Rapportre Rhodesie, Volume 1  
Sitrep van Rhodesie, 25 August to 15 December, Taakmag 1, 78.*

### **Appendices 4,5,6**

INT/C/21/1 Annexures A, B, C  
Sketches of clothes of guerrillas

### **Appendices 7 & 8**

Map used in trial of James April, exhibit M from *The State vs James Edward April*, Supreme Court of South Africa, Natal Provincial Division Case No. 84/71, 10-15 May 1971

### **Appendix 9**

From *BGG/210/3/11 Inligtings Rapportre, Rhodesie Vol 1*

### **Appendix 10**

From *BGG/302/6/1 Operations War Diary, Sep 67 HQ JCF,*

### **Appendices 11, 12, 13**

Copy of the posthumous commendation awarded to Basil February and a poster that was issued in the Western Cape in the 1980s.



## NAMES OF LUTHULI DETACHMENT COMBATANTS

APRIL, James

BALOI, Robert

DLAMINI, Edwin

FEBRUARY, Basil

HANI, Chris

LAGU, Lennox

LUTHULI, Daluxola Wordsworth

MAGOTSI,

MASIMINI, James

MATANJANA, Patrick Sindila

MOSHEGO, (Graham Morodi)

MAMPURU, Christopher

MASIPA, Barry

MAHAMBABA, Sparks

MASEMANE, James

MASEKO, Don

MATLEBYANI, Steven

MBALI, Jackson

MKHALIPI, Theo

MHLONGO, John

MOLOI, Sparks

MOKGOSI, Jones

MOTSEPE, Andries

NOKA, Phokanoka

NDULI, Joseph

NDUKU, Knox

NDUNA, Eric

NDLOVU, Joseph Spoe

NONDULU, Ernest

NZABA, Zorro

SEBANONE, Delmas

SETSOBA, Charles

SIMELANE, Jack

? Donga

WILSON, Zola

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HQ 1 Brigade  
Brady Barracks  
P.O. Box 698  
Bulawayo

Bulawayo 61140

G/5290

27 September 1967

See Distribution List

MINUTES OF A DEBRIEF ON OPERATION NICKEL  
HELD AT BRADY BARRACKS AT 0830 HOURS ON  
26 SEPTEMBER 1967

Present: For those in attendance see Annex B.

ITEM 1 - CHIEF OF STAFF'S ADDRESS

1. Having welcomed everyone to the Debrief the Chief of Staff explained that it was customary for a debrief to be held on completion of each operation. This debrief is different from others in so far as Operation NICKEL introduced many new aspects and it was necessary therefore that the debrief should be correspondingly bigger.
2. Aim. The aim of this debrief is to see how and where the Security Forces can improve in COIN operations. Nothing should be concealed which might serve to save lives in future operations.

ITEM 2 - COMMANDER 1 BRIGADE

3. Brigadier Prentice welcomed everyone and said that he endorsed the comments made by the C of S. He agreed that NICKEL had been an exacting operation which was well summed up as a "mixture of tragedy and success". It was impracticable to cover each event in detail as in 1 Brigade log alone there had been more than 1800 entries. The debrief will therefore follow the headings given in the Agenda, shown at Annex A... The sequence of events is given at Annex C.
4. The Comd 1 Bde then went into the events leading up to the incident which took place at the Inyantue River on 13 August 1967. Having given an outline of the sequence of events at Inyantue, he asked if anyone present had any comments which they wished to make at this juncture.
5. Cp Capt Deall said that the Inyantue incident would have been ideal for an air strike.
6. Capt Hoaking replied that he agreed but that at the time there were thought to be only five terrorists there. Had he realised that there were probably at least 21 he would have withdrawn his troops, set out stops approximately 1000 yards away and called for an air strike.
7. Maj Gobrin, who was the Army representative at the JOC at that time, said that orders were given to arm the Provosts that afternoon but there had been problems in refuelling which had prevented their use in an armed role. An armed helicopter was used.

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8. In discussion which followed it was found that the armed helicopter may have caused casualties among the terrorists but at the same time our own troops who were in close proximity were concerned that they might inadvertently have become targets. The helicopter had been mainly used as a communications relay station (Telstar).

#### ITEM 3 - LT COL GODWIN 1 RAR

9. Lt Col Godwin gave an outline of the whole Operation from the Inyanga Battle to the final contact on 4 September, after which date it was assessed that all terrorists who had crossed into Rhodesia on the night of 31 July/1 August had been accounted for by either our own Security Forces or the Botswana Police.

10. Especially noteworthy was the fact that aircraft were used extensively and that one of the Provosts completed more than 100 hours of flying during the operation.

11. Brig Coster said that it was not generally understood why Lt Smith's Platoon ran short of ammunition in their encounter on 22 August. Lt Col Godwin then explained that at the time each rifleman carried 50 rounds of ammunition most of which was carried in two magazines. The FN rifle had been newly issued and it was established that the soldiers had been to a large extent firing on automatic. This had led to a high expenditure of ammunition which had been the reason that the Platoon had had to withdraw. Since then the troops have been instructed to fire the FN only on single rounds. Certain men, such as leading scouts, would be permitted to fire on automatic.

12. The C of S added that the MAG had formerly been considered too heavy and cumbersome to be carried on OGIN operations and for this reason it was thought that the FN fired on automatic would be a suitable substitute. This had been proved wrong and the MAG had now regained popularity. Both Lt Col Godwin and Capt Atkinson affirmed that this was the case with 1 RAR and 1 RLI and that riflemen now carried 150 rounds each.

#### ITEM 4 - COMMAND AND CONTROL AT BRIGADE/ SECTOR/PROVINCE LEVEL

13. Brig Prentice said that this item and the next item would be discussed at a restricted level and all officers below the rank of Superintendent/Major/Squadron Leader were asked to leave the Debrief until Item 6.

14. Sector. After discussion it was agreed by all that there was an advantage in the Matabeleland Sector HRAF being deployed at the same time as a JOC was set up for a new operation. This would provide Comd 1 Bde with an Air Adviser and would streamline air effort on commencement of an operation. It was apparent that the HRAF require some form of permanent facilities at Brady Barracks both in accommodation and for communications.

15. Provision of AVGAS and AVTUR. The CMC suggested that in future all movement of fuel for HRAF be handled by Shell Company to as far forward as possible and that the Army assist in moving fuel to the more inaccessible places. There had been certain confusion during Op NICKEL with both the Army and Shell being involved in the movement of fuel.



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16. Location of Brigade HQ. The question was raised as to whether there was a likelihood of Brigade HQ moving into the field during a COIN operation. After discussion it was agreed that this was most unlikely as Comd 1 Bde would want to keep in close touch with the Provincial Security Co-ordinating Committee which was situated in Bulawayo and that the protection of the Headquarters would be an added burden on the availability of troops. The Brigade HQ would therefore only take to the field in a limited war situation.
17. JOC SITREP. Brig Pringle invited any comments with regard to the content and passage of the JOC SITREP. It was generally felt that the SITREP should only be passed on the one Service channel as had happened during Op NICKEL and that at each successive Headquarters the contents be passed laterally to the other Services. The C of S said that this matter would be taken up at a higher level. The arrangement whereby the SITREP was submitted during Op NICKEL worked well and it is recommended that this become the practice in future.
18. Closing of JOC. The procedures for closing down a JOC were discussed. The C of S apparently would not close down a JOC without the recommendation coming from each Service representative separately. They would not act on the recommendation contained in the JOC SITREP without substantiation from each Service Chief and it was for this reason that the JOC on Op NICKEL remained open somewhat longer than was necessary. The C of S said that each Head of Service liked to be advised individually in this regard before making a recommendation.
19. Passage of Information. There had been a dearth of information at the beginning of Op NICKEL which was not attributed to the failure of any one Service keeping the other Services informed. Throughout the Operation each Service had passed on information to the others as it became known and there was frequent liaison between HQOPOL/Comd 1 Bde/OC Sector. The same apparently applied at the higher levels. The only confusion which did occur with regard to passage of information was brought about by the JOC for TP camps starting off as a mock JOC which did not require the onward passage of the SITREP. The Provincial Commissioner, Matabeleland North, asked that in future he be kept more in the picture as at times he had been embarrassed in being unable to advise other civil departments and firms on what was going on. It was proposed that the Secretary to the Provincial Security Co-ordinating Committee should approach the Police or Army Commander daily during operations to get the latest information.

ITEM 4 - COMMAND AND CONTROL IN THE  
FIELD AT JOC LEVEL

20. Information. The first question raised was that of outsiders being brought onto the JOC for information. Both Lt Col Geddes and Chief Superintendent Thorpe thought that there had been much value in the DC at Tjolotjo being in attendance daily at the JOC. Not only had he been able to provide valuable information but it had enabled him to keep others in his District informed where necessary. The DC at Wankie had in the early stages also been kept well informed of events. Whilst the Operation was in the Wankie National Park area the Chief Warden had been represented at the JOC and again had been of great assistance whilst also being kept informed himself of the current situation.

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21. Positioning of JOC. The BRAP felt that it was more in their interests to have the JOC positioned at a forward airfield as had been the case at Tjolotjo. Prior to this when the JOC had been at Shapi Pans and the forward airfield was at Wankle Main Camp airfield the Air Force had encountered difficulties, especially with communications. It was agreed that this was a good idea in principle but that the JOC should be as near to the scene of operations as possible and should not be tied to a forward airfield. It was pointed out, however, that there were numerous advantages to all Services in having the JOC at a forward airfield. The exact positioning of the JOC should be agreed by the senior member of each Service involved on the JOC. It was agreed by all that the JOC should be divorced from populated centres whenever possible.

22. System of Command and Control. Lt Col Gilbert raised the question of whether it was not better to have one person in command of the JOC. Everyone who had been on the Op NICKEL JOC supported the existing arrangement and felt that with the present tempo of COIN operations this system worked very well. Brig Coester remarked that a visiting Portuguese Forces Delegation were most surprised that it was a workable system as it cut across all recognised teaching. Brig Pringle suggested that it may be the affability of the Rhodesian character which enabled this system to work so well.

ITEM 6 - INTELLIGENCE.

23. Intelligence was obtained during Op NICKEL through immediate interrogation by the leader of the force capturing the terrorist and subsequently from interrogation by Special Branch. The value of immediate interrogation was questioned as in some instances it had proved worth while whilst on other occasions it had been useless. This was attributed to several reasons and it was agreed that certain value can nevertheless be obtained from initial interrogation.

24. The following information was provided by Superintendent Best and resulted from Special Branch interrogation of captured terrorists, mainly ZAFU who had proved to be more easily broken down :-

a. The group consisting of approximately 80 terrorists entered Rhodesia on 1 August 1967 and later separated into two groups destined for Nkai and Tjolotjo.

b. Nkai Group.

(1) Their aim was to establish base camps and cells for attacks on farms and European establishments in the Gwelo area. ANC members with the group were then to travel to South Africa via Matopos with ZAFU assistance.

(2) The group consisted of 23 terrorists who had been instructed to avoid contact with Security Forces if possible. Further interrogation continues to confirm this information.

c. Luthuli Group.

(1) This group consisted of approximately 56 terrorists whose aim was to establish a base camp in the area of the Nata/Togwani Rivers. Most of the group were ANC members whose final destination was to be South Africa.

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- (2) Government installations in the Tjolotjo area were to be attacked and local sympathisers trained and armed.
  - (3) It is difficult to ascertain details of this group's plans as the leader kept these to himself and he managed to evade capture by Rhodesian Forces. The tactics of the group will be covered in Item 7.
  - (4) The group had been told that they could expect to encounter Rhodesian Forces as far as the Mankie National Park but that thereafter they need only have concern for aircraft.
  - (5) The group was well controlled by the leader who never allowed members to separate from the group without his instructions. Food and water was strictly controlled and was pooled and issued on the instructions of the leader.
  - (6) Each ANC terrorist carried £20 - £30 whilst the ZAPU leader carried most of the ZAPU cash leaving each man with only about £2.
  - (7) The terrorists had been instructed not to disclose the crossing point under any circumstances. This had resulted in much misleading information being gained by Special Branch initially.
- d. Clothing worn by the terrorists was the usual combination of uniform and civilian clothing but one distinguishing factor was that each man had been issued with a pair of blue PT shorts which most wore as under-pants.
- e. All weapons carried were either automatic or self-loading and in addition the groups carried machine guns, grenades and explosives. Home-made detonator mechanisms were found at Inyentus where the explosives expert had been killed. Each man carried about 500 rounds of ammunition.
- f. The Lutshuli Group had a transistor radio with which they listened to news broadcasts, and consequently they knew of the Inyentus incident which had involved the Nkai Group. They also had Land Apportionment maps (scale 1:1,000,000) and compasses. Despite these, smaller groups picked up later after the Lutshuli Group had split had no idea of their whereabouts.
- g. Game had been shot and killed in the Mankie National Park area and cooking was done mainly during the day time.
- h. Although small quantities of drugs were found on certain individuals who appeared to take drugs habitually, there was no indication that the terrorists were taking drugs widely as had been thought previously.
- i. The Coloured who was shot in the Figtree area on 16 August had crossed with the main party but had apparently a separate mission from that of the Lutshuli and Nkai Groups.

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25. Brig Prentice thanked Superintendent Bast for his very detailed and clear exposition and asked whether anyone had any questions.

26. In answer to various questions the following was revealed :-

a. It was not known to what extent the Luthuli Group's morale had been affected by RBG broadcasts but it is doubtful that they were concerned with the fate of the Nkai Group.

b. The air strike of 23 August seemed to have made no marked impression on the terrorists as it was probably too far away from them.

c. The two groups separated at a spot east of Wanle on 9 August. They had apparently been given no specific routes to their destinations, this being the responsibility of the leaders concerned.

d. The terrorists had not laid any deliberate ambushes and had attempted to conceal their tracks where they thought they may be seen by Security Forces, eg. on roads. No explanation could be given for the litter and items of terrorists clothing and equipment dropped in and around their base camps and hides.

e. Although they had captured Army radios there was no indication that they used these to listen in to operational broadcasts. One captured terrorist said that an attempt had been made using a captured radio to lure a helicopter to land in their vicinity but no one could recall hearing any such transmission. One captured terrorist said that he thought that the helicopters had a homing device and could locate the position of radios whilst they were being used and for this reason it was unlikely that attempts would be made by terrorists with a captured radio to transmit.

f. There was no indication that the ZBO was being used to pass messages to the terrorists on their transistor radios.

g. The terrorists had been given their crossing point by officials of the banned parties in Zambia and as far as was known they had been given no choice as to where they should cross.

h. As far as could be ascertained the groups had contacted only two civilian sympathisers since crossing but there may have been others. The system of reward for information leading to the capture of terrorists is widely known to local inhabitants in the border areas. Police patrols keep store owners in border areas informed of what they are after.

i. It sometimes takes as long as one week to break an individual and obtain authentic information. On other occasions useful information is given shortly after being captured.



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ITEM 7 - TACTICS

Enemy

27. Superintendent Best provided information on terrorist tactics which had been gained by interrogation. Items of note are as follows :-

a. The groups intended to move mainly at night and only a little during the day. Their pattern was to be as follows :-

- (1) Walk from dusk until midnight.
- (2) Rest from midnight to approximately 0400 hours.
- (3) Walk from approximately 0400 hours until dawn.
- (4) Set up base camp and rest throughout day.

This pattern was interrupted once Op NICKEL started and sometimes the terrorists were forced to move in daylight until they found a suitable base camp area.

b. Their formations on the move were to have the group led by two scouts, followed by a recon group of about four men, followed in turn by the remainder who moved in three single files with four to five men as a rear guard and two scouts on the flanks.

c. When basing up the group split into sections and spread out in a circle. Sections were spaced ten to fifteen feet apart and members of the section dug shallow hollows for themselves approximately six feet apart. The whole position was in all round defence with sentries posted outside the circle. Protection from the air was gained by lying under fallen tree trunks and thick foliage.

d. No deliberate ambushes were laid but the base camps could be used as a suitable ambush position if necessary. All contacts except that on 23 August were spontaneous and not preplanned. The incident at Inyantu occurred whilst the group was resting.

e. The attack made on 13 Platoon position on 23 August was made in an attempt by the terrorists to obtain food and water and was probably brought about by the apparent lack of sentries and the fact that the terrorists had had success on the previous day.

f. There had been an estimated 45 terrorists at Leasha Pan at the time that the Mortar Platoon had made contact with two terrorists who had been at the pan to ambush game coming to drink. The terrorists had seen four vehicles passing them by at that time and had laid up for the rest of the day.

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8. The terrorists were ordered not to fire at aircraft as this would give away their positions. Furthermore they believed that the underside of helicopters was armoured. When aircraft were overhead all base camp procedures such as cooking were stopped. Aircraft were in general cause for great concern to the terrorists.
28. Almost without exception the number of terrorists being followed up had been underestimated. Comd 1 Bde pointed out that it was better to overestimate than to underestimate the number of terrorists being followed.
29. Before basing up the group split and individuals moved out at 90° angle from their direction of movement. This was confusing for troops following up as there were several tracks which could be followed and time had to be spent in determining the direction of the terrorists.
30. There was no indication that any form of mine had been laid and this is probably attributable to the fact that the explosives experts had been killed earlier on. The detonating mechanisms found were similar to others picked up on Op ISQOPE.
31. The ZAPU and ANC terrorists had not been trained together at any stage and had married up for the first time two days before crossing into Rhodesia.

#### Own Forces.

32. Lt Col Godwin said that after the Ivyantuc incident the policy had been for the minimum of a platoon to follow up on insurgent tracks. A new procedure for following up was being evolved and is shown at Annex D. It is noteworthy that all those killed and many of the wounded had been hit whilst standing or running. Nothing could be gained from standing up and in future the policy is to get to ground immediately fire was opened and from there to win the fire-fight and "peppercot" as taught for conventional warfare. This had proved to be the answer in the latter stages of Op NICKEL.
33. In answer to a question as to whether it was necessary to indicate the position of our own Forces to the RRF on 23 August by lighting fires CO 1 RRF said that he did not know but he did not think it contributed to the attack made later on 13 Platoon's position.
34. Although the air strike on 23 August may have had no direct value it was agreed that the use of heavy jet aircraft weapons should not be discounted in future. The targets given covered too large an area and should be pinpoint targets where possible. Attack by light aircraft may be more useful and the Trojan will be capable of firing 57 mm rockets.
35. The idea of a pilot attacking possible targets ahead of the ground forces was not generally accepted as a good idea unless the Commander of the ground force is in favour of such action. There is little chance of a pilot picking out terrorists in a base camp but he may be able to advise the ground force Commander of likely enemy positions. There may be occasions when it is not a good idea for aircraft to fly ahead of a follow up force but this must be left to the ground force Commander to decide at the time.
36. On the problem of defending forward airfields it was pointed out that the RRAF is responsible only for placing security guards on the aircraft whilst the Army is required to defend the airfield.



(36. contd)

The availability of troops for this task will obviously present problems but it is the responsibility of the Army to decide how these can be overcome. At Tjolotjo one HQ and six ACR were provided for airfield defence and this was acknowledged as being inadequate.

37. Trackers proved invaluable and it was recommended that there should be a pool of trackers in each Battalion. The use of civilian trackers was unsatisfactory when the situation became dangerous. Preferably an establishment should be created for this pool. Police dogs had not been very successful in the tracking of terrorists and it was pointed out that they are not trained for this type of action. They do not free-range and the handler is most vulnerable. The RRAF is currently investigating the possibility of a dog free-ranging with a two-way radio after being dropped from a helicopter.

38. Capt Hosking claimed that the teaching in ISOPS for an immediate assault on a terrorist camp is bad tactics and that the pamphlet ought to be amended as soon as a better system was evolved.

### ITEM 8 - COMMUNICATIONS

39. Aircraft had been used a great deal for Talstar-type relay of messages for ground forces. It was pointed out that this was misuse of aircraft and could not be counted upon for future operations although it had proved most useful. CO 1 RAR said that the TR 28 could be used whilst on the follow up but that this would have to be done during a halt.

40. There had been considerable interference between the various radios at JOC, since there had been three SSBs close to one another. There was also interference on the SR 60s between channel 1 and channel 6. The operation commenced on channel 1 instead of channel 2 and remained on this channel to the end. The apparent reason for this was that certain Police Reserve Air King aircraft have not got the full range of channels. There are two such aircraft in Matabeleland. The SAP helicopters were in the same position initially but were issued with crystals later. It was proposed that a pool of extra crystals be held at Battalion HQ to overcome this problem.

41. Because operations in Matabeleland did not coincide with any operation in Midlands at the time there was no undue interference on channel 1 although a certain amount was noticed. In future all operations must commence with the correct channel for the Sector concerned.

42. Capt Templar, RSO of 1 RAR, said that the TR 28s had been received only two days before Op NICKEL commenced but had nevertheless proved to be very good sets. Generally there was difficulty with communications from 2100 hrs until sunrise next day. There was also a certain amount of interference with units of 2 Bde who were operating on the same frequency. Spare batteries for TR 28s are recommended as some batteries did not hold their charge and this rendered the set useless. D Sigs, Lt Col de Haest, said that he was aware of this problem and that the matter was being looked into.

43. Difficulty had been found with carrying the TR 28 and a suitable man-pack was required. The existing man-packs are too cumbersome.



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44. The field telephones held by 1 BAR were criticized on account of their age. D Sigs said that they should be boarded if necessary and new telephones would be issued as replacements.

45. Some officers felt that too much emphasis was given to the encoding of messages as in many cases the same messages were broadcast over the RBC and SABO shortly afterwards. Especially in the case of formal Slider messages where every letter or word had to be encoded there was considerable delay and inconvenience caused to both sender and receiver. D Sigs said that he would look into the matter but that it had been introduced originally because of the possibility of our broadcasts being monitored by sophisticated forces. The C of S said that the OCC had agreed to only certain portions of the JOC SITREP being encoded.

46. Gp Capt Deall said that aircraft using Telstar communications were often as high as 13,000 feet. Any messages which they passed could be picked up from as far as, for example, Francistown. The same apparently applied to BSAP mobile SSBs which did not use any form of code.

47. The question of the ground to air Shackle Code was raised as it was felt by some that there should be one Shackle Code for all purposes. This was not feasible as each unit had its own Shackle Code.

48. Lt Col Godwin suggested that nicknames for places should be standardized between the three Services.

49. It had been revealed from interrogation of terrorists that Security Force personnel could be located by the sound of their radios. D Sigs pointed out that the headset should be used at all times on the SRA 60 and that the loudspeaker should be used only when the headset breaks down.

50. The OMC, Lt Col Mathews, said that the SMD 422s should be used on the Brigade admin net and not as used at present as the TR 28s could take their place. Another five SMD 422s are shortly to be issued to each Brigade.

51. General Security. Lt Col Walls, GSO I, said that Op NICKEL had shown that there was a lack of security at all levels of the three Services. In some cases press releases had been forced upon us through information getting out to the public causing some very bad rumours. It must be impressed upon all ranks that they should not under any circumstances discuss what took place on operations. Brig Prantice supported this by saying that shortly after Op NICKEL commenced there had been serious rumours in Wankie of terrorist successes against Security Forces. It is understood that the Voice of America had broadcast a report that the terrorists had taken over Wankie airfield and this was believed by many of the residents. It was agreed that certain prominent civilians must be kept informed of operational developments as suggested by the Provincial Commissioner, Mr Hagelthorn.

ITEM 9 - WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

52. The Chairman said that terrorist weapons had already been discussed and therefore emphasis would be given to our own forces' weapons and ammunition. The C of S said that the Commissioner of Police had been asked to keep a set of terrorist weapons in Salisbury, Bulawayo and Gwelo to be available for the information of Security Force personnel.

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53. Grenades. The 80 grenade had proved excellent but the scale of issue was too limited. The scale was recommended to be similar to that of the 36 grenade. Lt Col Walls asked if the instant light grenade would be acceptable with a two second delay as problems had been encountered in producing immediate light. This was accepted but a one second delay would be preferred if possible. The Chief of Staff said that cup dischargers for the FN rifle were available if they were wanted.
54. Flame Throwers. Maj Willar suggested that each platoon should have a flame thrower which would be both effective in burning out the bush in which terrorists were concealed and the fire would also be very demoralizing for the enemy. Weight seemed to be the major problem if these items could be obtained. The GSO I said that Lt Col Howlands would be asked to look into the possibility of obtaining flame throwers.
55. Shotguns. The RAR had only been issued with shotguns during the operation and had not had time to familiarise troops with them. It was proposed that they be available for use by leading squads.
56. Napalm. The RRAP have Napalm bombs which might be effective in an area of bush known to contain terrorists. It had not proved very effective in burning out the Mopani bush in the area of the Nata River.
57. Flares. The Icarus flares are made in Britain and new supplies are therefore not available. An instantaneous ground flare has been developed and will be issued shortly.

ITEM 10 - LOGISTICS

58. Boots. There have been several complaints about the boots issued to troops. There is a need for a better boot to be issued as European troops now purchase their own boots through the Canteen, Llewellyn Barracks, or Cuthberts, at a considerable expense. The CMC said that he was fully aware of the problem and that Bata are working on boots which are undergoing user trials. The problem lies in the provision of suitable soles but it is anticipated that the new boots will be available for issue in about five months time.
59. Rations. No problems had been found with rations except in the case of providing fresh rations for 2 Cdo 1 RLI at the end of Op NICKEL when they moved to Wenkie. Maj Turner said that difficulty was being found in estimating how many replacement ration packs should be made at any one time as PRO returns during August had not given a true reflection of ration consumption. Lt Col Mathews supported Maj Turner and said that the return was useless unless it was properly submitted.
60. Clothing. The question of the Army providing personnel from other Services with replacement clothing was raised. The CMC said that there should be no problem if those receiving sign a form RA Q3. The BSAP are currently investigating the possibility of obtaining suitable clothing for OOB operations.
61. Vehicles. The CMC stated that about 50 RLs are due this financial year and it is hoped to replace 4 x 2 vehicles with those where the establishment permits. CO 11 ST Pl said that he now had an excellent petrol burner in the form of a Thames Trader (4 x 2) but that this vehicle was limited to fairly good roads and could not get forward to all positions where 4 x 4 vehicles were. The CMC said he understood this problem. He also said that he intended to bring the RAR up to establishment in Landrovers.



62. Equipment. CO 1 RAR asked if the establishment of water bottles could be two per man. The QMG said that this was possible but the second water bottle would have to be 37 pattern. Maj Turner said that a pool of 400 water bottles per Battalion is presently arranged.

63. Weapons. 11 SF Pl still has Stens Mk 5 which are untrustworthy. Bulawayo Wkops has No 4 rifles for PRTs. The QMG said that the Stens will shortly be replaced by Sterlings and the No 4s replaced by JRs.

64. Personal. CO 11 SF Pl said that his Unit was unable to function properly with the CAE NGOs as they are too young and irresponsible. During Op NICKEL he had to borrow HQs to accompany patrol bowmen moving to the Operational area. The C of S said that an answer to the problem might be to hold a nucleus of regular CAEs but he did not recommend this. The Staff would look into this problem.

#### ITEM 11 - CASUALTY PROCEDURES

65. The SMO 1 Bde, Maj Lambert-Porter, described how casualties were dealt with during Op NICKEL. Points arising from this were as follows :-

a. Although each Brigade is equipped to provide one section of a CCP the staff are not available and have to be obtained from local resources.

b. It may have been possible to bring out the casualties at Inyanga during daylight had a 2 inch mortar been available with smoke bombs.

c. With the exception of two casualties on 23 August, all casualties occurring on that date took approximately 20 hours to reach the CCP due to difficulty with communications.

d. Tpr Engelbrecht was evacuated to Bulawayo Hospital within a few hours of being wounded.

e. As much warning as possible of casualty evacuation must be given to Hospital Superintendents to prepare for casualty reception.

f. The 1 RAR medical establishment is unsuitable and requires scrutiny.

g. Identification of certain casualties was very difficult as both identity discs had been removed from the body. These are also required for blood transfusion purposes.

h. If helicopters are available they should be used to fly wounded casualties direct from the scene of battle or RAR to the hospital to save delays.

66. The DMS, Col Johnston, in reply made the following comments :-

a. The RMA system for Troop Medical Orderlies may work with 1 RAR. At the moment a lot depends on the medical knowledge of the Platoon Commander.

b. The RAR is a limited war concept and the RMO may be better placed at a forward airfield. There is no chance of getting more than one doctor per Battalion.



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- c. RRAF support in casualty evacuation on Op NICKEL was excellent and it was hoped that helicopters will continue to be available for this task.
- d. Consideration is being given to establishing an Air Force Medical Unit at a forward airfield. The difficulty with this is in finding suitable manpower.
- e. The Ministry of Health can provide a Field Surgery Team. The difficulty with this is the spread out nature of COIN operations.
- f. Aircraft have been landing with casualties at Llewellyn Barracks and for some reason or other an ambulance has been required to standby on all occasions that aircraft land there. Could not casualties be landed at Woodvale instead and would this not be more suitable?

67. Comd 1 Bde said that he preferred the use of Llewellyn Barracks airfield when casualties are coming in as otherwise rungers from Woodvale are likely to be out of all proportion to the facts. This was a question of security. Furthermore Woodvale was only one mile closer to the Bulawayo hospital than Llewellyn Barracks.

68. Gp Capt Deall said that helicopters could be used to move casualties directly to hospitals but this would take the helicopter away from the operational area for an increased length of time when it might be required for uplifting other casualties.

69. There had initially been no communications by radio between the JOC and the OCP although the OCP was able to contact Brigade HQ by telephone. On one occasion a casualty was understood by the JOC to be dead whilst the OCP certified him alive. This would not have occurred if the OCP had been able to communicate with the JOC.

70. Capt Hosking told how Cpl Davidson had had his identity discs shot off him at the Inyanga River. All present were reminded that there is no need to remove the identity discs of any casualties before burial and that these are to remain with the casualty throughout the course of evacuation. Only when burial takes place in the field will one disc be removed. This procedure is published in AG Standing Orders and Instructions. Brig Prentice said that he had personally inspected TF personnel going off on Op PANTALON and there were several discrepancies with regard to identification discs.

71. Lt Col Godwin considered the first field dressings to be too small and recommended a larger dressing similar to a shell dressing. Concern was also expressed at the age of some field dressings.

72. The precedence action for NOTICAS messages was discussed as some felt that there was no need for them to be Operation Immediate. There were also suggestions that it was unnecessary to encode any part of the NOTICAS. After discussion it was agreed that the precedence action should remain at Operation Immediate and that the identity of casualties should be encoded. This will prevent the next of kin and other relatives from hearing about a casualty before an official release is made.



ITEM 12 - NEW CONCEPTS ARISING  
FROM DEBRIEF

73. The C of S put forward the following thoughts :-
- a. Would a defoliant have been of any use on Op NICKEL? Co 1 RAR said that an attempt had been made to burn off the leaves from the Mopani trees with little success. A suitable defoliant might have been the answer depending on the length of time needed for it to take effect. The C of S agreed to pursue the matter.
  - b. A suggested system of impregnating areas of bush with tear gas was discussed. It was generally felt that this would prove ineffective but the matter should be investigated by Army HQ. The RRAF is able to drop tear gas grenades but would favour fragmentation bombs in similar circumstances to Op NICKEL.
  - c. Armoured vests are used by helicopter crews in Vietnam. After discussion it was decided that these were unlikely to be of use to the Army although the RRAF is investigating the possibility of their use.
74. The South African Forces are presently trying out a tinfall blanket which is very light and easily carried. The C of S said that trials on this had shown it to be unsuitable.
75. The question of standardization of sole patterns on Security Forces' footwear was discussed. The new Army boots may have no distinctive sole marking but this problem was not considered suitable for further discussion at the Debrief. Maj Turner is to take up the matter at the next meeting of the Combined Services Clothing and Equipment Committee.
76. Brig Pringle asked Lt Col Culbert if, as a result of the discussion, he saw any reason to alter any teachings at the School of Infantry. The Lead S Inf replied that this was a policy matter for Army HQ and he would await the full report from 1 RAR.
77. Sqn Ldr Rogers said that troops are inclined to forget helicopter drills and he suggested that they receive refresher training whenever the opportunity presents itself. Mock-up helicopters are useful for this purpose. Cpt Deall reminded all that the helicopter is very vulnerable and the destruction of a helicopter carrying troops could result in heavy casualties and much prestige for the enemy. LZs must be secured whenever possible.
78. The C of S said that TF could be called up under the Zone system on a selective basis to defend forward airfields and perform other duties. This has political implications but it should be borne in mind for the future.
79. The possibility of using public address systems from aircraft for propaganda purposes was discussed. The RRAF will shortly have two such equipments available but it is doubtful that they could be successfully used against hard-core terrorists.
80. Brig Ooster asked whether it was considered necessary for some form of joint services training to be carried out. Propol said that he thought there might be considerable merit in this idea.



CLOSING ADDRESSES

81. Brig Prentice thanked everyone present for their attendance and for their valuable contributions. It was good to see so many representatives from the BSAP and BRAP present at the discussion. In particular he wished to thank the Chief of Staff and Senior Staff Officers at Army HQ for their unfailing help and advice given throughout the Operation. He also expressed his gratitude for the assistance they had given him personally during the day's discussion.

82. Brig Prentice went on to say that although a further crossing of terrorists had been anticipated during the last two weeks of Op NICKEL, there was still no evidence that it had taken place. He thought that the experience gained on Op NICKEL would serve to help the three Services in working well together as a team in the future.

83. Brig Joster closed the Debrief by once again thanking everyone for attending, and especially those officers who had taken part in Op NICKEL.

*J.L. FURBER*  
(J.L. FURBER)  
Capt  
GSO 305  
Secretary

- Annex: A. Agenda  
B. Officers attending Operation NICKEL Debrief  
C. Sequence of Events.  
D. Proposed platoon follow-up formation.

Distribution:



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ANNEX C TO C/6290  
DATED 27 SEPTEMBER 1967

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

OF NICKEL

10 AUGUST 1967

1. 10 P1 1 RAR ARRESTED ONE CT, MEMBER OF SANC, NEAR LUKOZI BRIDGE MK 6169 P.M. 10 AUGUST (THU). INFO GAINED THAT GANG CONSISTED OF 3 SANC AND 3 ZAPU HEADING FOR BULAWAYO. ENTERED RHODESIA 31 JULY (MON) 1967.
2. 120530 (SAT) ONE CT SHOT RAILWAY SECURITY GUARD WHILEST BEING MOVED TO BSAP STATION, DEFT AND ESCAPED. LATER STOLE CYCLE AND CAR.
3. CT LEFT 5 OF PARTY AT LABANGWE RAILWAY BRIDGE HAVING ENTERED WEST OF VICT FALLS ON 31 JULY (MON) 1967.
4. 12 AUGUST (SAT). ONE SPOOR FOUND BONGORO MK 5348 JOINING OTHERS, EVENTUALLY BECOMING FIVE AT TSHANEANDA SIDING MK 5751.
5. AFTERNOON 13 AUGUST (SUN) FOUR CT CONTACTED. FIRE EXCHANGED RESULTING IN SIX SECURITY FORCES WOUNDED. MK 6446.
6. POLICE INVESTIGATE REPORT OF FIVE ARMED PERSONNEL IN AREA MK 9573. NO DEFINITE INFO AVAILABLE. (LATER FOUND TO BE INCORRECT).
7. POLICE REPORT FOLLOWING SPOOR POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS THAT OF CT TYPE BOOTS FROM AREA GRAY RIVER HOTEL MK 1942 SOUTH WEST ON BEARING OF 200° MAGNETIC. ONE PERSON ONLY, BELIEVED CARRYING PACK. TRACKS LOST 131000 (SUN). NO FURTHER INFO AVAILABLE.
8. 141100 (MON). FOUR CT CAPTURED AREA OF AMBUSH 13 AUGUST (SUN). ONE CAPTURED AREA RAILWAY LINE MK 6448 (ALL KILLED). ONE EKS FOUND.
9. 14 AUGUST (MON). ONE CT CAPTURED AT INTUNDHILA SIDING MK 3303 BY RAILWAY SECURITY GUARD. TRACKS OF 3 - 5 FOUND. INFO RECEIVED ON INTERROGATION THAT GROUP OF TEN THEN TWELVE CROSSED APPROXIMATELY 31 JULY (MON) 1967. CT UNARMED.
10. 2 ARMED CT, ARRESTED BY BOTSWANA POLICE AT PANDA-MA-JENGA ON 14 AUGUST (MON) 1967. THIRD CT KNOWN TO BE STILL IN SAME AREA. (THIRD CT NOW ARRESTED).

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11. 3 SUSPICIOUS AFRICANS REPORTED 160700B (WED). RAN OFF ROAD INTO BUSH ON APPROACHING ROAD BLOCK IN AREA. (LATER CHECKED AND CLEARED).
12. NEWS REPORT - 1 CT SHOT IN FIGTREE AREA - SAME MAN AS MENTIONED IN SERIAL 2 : 1 PISTOL RECOVERED. 16 AUGUST (WED).
13. LOCALS REPORT TO JOC THAT 2 ARMED MEN WITH BANDOLIERS OF AMMO REQUESTED WATER AT 170100 AT MK 850042. 17 AUGUST (THU).
14. SAME LOCALS AS ABOVE REPORT SPOOR OF 4 AT MK 740180.
15. C/S FOUND REST CAMP OF 4 AND 70 ROUNDS 7.62 mm SHORT AMMO AT MK 770103. 17 AUGUST (THU).
16. C/S 13 ON TRACKS OF 9 CT AREA MK 840023. AMBUSH POSITIONS AT MK 565110, MK 635130, MK 635150 AND MK 725180. 17 AUGUST (THU).
17. 6 CAPTURED, 8 KILLED/WOUNDED. REPORT RECEIVED 171600 HRS (FRI). LOC MT 950880. 3 PL 1 BAR.
18. B COY FOUND TRACKS OF CT AT MT 310820 ON 18 AUGUST (FRI).
19. MORTAR PL ON TRACKS OF 9 CT AT LAST LIGHT 18 AUGUST (FRI). MT 450510.
20. MORTAR PL CONTACTED 2 CT AT MT 640340. NO ACTION. FOLLOWED UP. 1 CT KILLED. SUSPECT MORE CTs IN SAME AREA. 191200 (SAT).
21. 18 AUGUST (FRI). BOTSWANA POLICE CAPTURE 1 ZAFU AND 2 ANG CTs AT MT 050630. ALSO FOUND 1 DEAD CT - DIED OF NATURAL CAUSES. CT STATES :- 8 IN GROUP, 4 ANG AND 4 ZAFU - BOTSWANA POLICE FOLLOW TRACKS OF 4 CTs HEADING SOUTH WEST.
22. 1 CT CAPTURED BY BOTSWANA POLICE DATE, GR UNKNOWN. POSSIBLY FROM SAME GROUP WHICH MCR PL CONTACTED MT 640340.
23. CT REPORTED BY CIVILIAN TO HAVE BEEN AT HALF WAY HOTEL 20 AUGUST POLICE INVESTIGATING.
24. BOTSWANA POLICE ARREST 2 UNIDENTIFIED MALES IN OREN RIV TRUCK FRANCISTOWN AREA 17/18 AUGUST - 1 THOUGHT TO BE COLOURED.
25. 21/22 AUGUST RLY SECURITY POLICE ARRESTED 2 UNIDENTIFIED MALES AT TSESSEBE SIDING NH 601085 - THEY SLEPT NIGHT BESIDE RLY LINE AND WERE FOUND ON TRAIN FOR GABERONES - BOTSWANA POLICE ARE INTERROGATING - NO FURTHER DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE.

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26. FRESH TRACKS FOUND NJ 710135 ON 22 AUGUST. HEADING SOUTH WEST TOWARDS MJ 790090. B COY STOPS IN POSITION AT MJ 765045. TO MJ 870085.
27. CT BASE CAMP FOUND 221330 AT MJ 730100.
28. CONTACT WITH CTs MADE BY 1 PL A COY. 1 OFFICER AND 1 AFRICAN WO KILLED. 3 CTs KILLED (221515).
29. FRESH TRACKS AT NK 280050 C/S 13 FOLLOW UP AT 221800.
30. 1 CT KILLED BY GAME SCOUT AT MK 410110. 221946.
31. 1 CT CAPTURED AREA MJ 8308. REVEALS GANG NOW 26 CTs (23 AUGUST).
32. CT ATTACKS 13 PL B COY BASE CAMP AT MJ 8603 EVENING 23 AUGUST - 1 POLICEMAN 1 AOR KILLED, NUMEROUS WOUNDED - FOLLOWING DAY 2 DEAD CTs, SEVERAL WATER BOTTLES FOUND. 15 PL B COY REPORT CTs USING OUR BOOTS, COMBAT JACKETS AND JUNGLE HATS. STATE 1 GHINAMAN IN GANG WHO WAS SHOT AND INJURED.
33. POLICE ARREST 3 - 2 ADMIT BEING CTs MJ 0910 24 AUGUST - SEE SERIAL 654.
34. 1 CT BODY FOUND 26 AUGUST IN AREA OF SERIAL 28.
35. 5 SUSPECT CT SIGHTED BY DAKOTA AIRCRAFT AT NJ 180090 27 AUGUST. INVESTIGATED THAT NO CFM OF CT IN AREA.
36. 4 CTs ARRESTED BY BOTSWANA POLICE 27 OR 28 AUGUST - 2 SKS 1 MG AND 1 SLR RECOVERED.
37. POSSIBLE SIGHTING OF 2 ARMED AND UNIFORMED AFRICANS ASKING DIRECTIONS TO MTL RIVER AT 860070 - POLICE FOLLOWING UP.
38. 1 JUNGLE HAT AND 2 GLOVES RECOVERED (1 MAN'S AND 1 WOMAN'S) AND TRACKS MOVING SOUTH EAST POSSIBLY MADE NIGHT 28/29 AUGUST (20 MEN).
39. 1 PAIR LONG TROUSERS AND 1 PAIR KD SHORTS AND SF LETTERS FOUND AT NH 047993 30 AUGUST.
40. RESTING PLACE FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 FOUND AT NJ 011011 30 AUGUST.
41. FRESH TRACKS FOUND NJ 075060 30 AUGUST.
42. 2 CTs CAPTURED BY POLICE AT NH 350940 ON BUS 30 AUGUST 1000 HRS.



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43. HIDE LOCATED AT NH 447993.
44. 1 CT CAPTURED BY 2 CDO AT NH 090980 AT 0935 ON 31 AUGUST. NO PACK OR WEAPONS.
45. 4 CT KILLED AND 3 ESCAPED AT NH 080977 AT 1235 HRS 31 AUGUST. 1 MAG AND 1 FN AND MAGAZINES RECOVERED.
46. 5 CT SEEN BY BOTSWANA POLICE 500 YDS INSIDE BOTSWANA AT POINT 87 NH 240760 WALKING SOUTH EAST. TRACKS WENT INTO RHODESIA. CT WERE CARRYING PACKS NO WEAPONS MENTIONED.
47. 4 - 8 CTs APPROACHED AFRICAN DAM WORKER NEAR FT 130 NH 050889 NIGHT 31/01 REQ 30 GALS OF WATER AND LEFT £5 FOR FOOD. AMBUSHES PLANNED.
48. 4 AFRICANS WEARING MIXED UNIFORM/CIV CLOTHING, BOOTS AND CARRYING PACKS BOUGHT 4 CHICKENS FROM LOCALS AT NH 070820 NIGHT 01/02 AT 2359 HOURS MOVED OFF SE.
49. FRAW AIRCRAFT FIRED ON AT 021105B BY 4 CT HEADING ON BEARING 165° MAGNETIC.
50. 1 RHODESIAN CT JONATHAN MAYO WITH 1 RIFLE, 1 PISTOL AND 1 GRENADE, MAP, FULL KIT AND PACK ARRESTED AT PT 5 MILES E OF ST PAULS MISSION - PK 2717 ON WAY TO NKAI ARRESTED BY BSAP (2 SEP).
51. INFO THAT 5 CT IN AREA INKIASI RIVER AREA, POLICE FROM TJOLOTJO MOVED BY AIR TO INVESTIGATE. FOUND DEAD RHINO AND TRACKS OF 5 CT MOVING EAST.
52. BOTSWANA POLICE SIGHTED 12 (3 SEP) (A.M.) ARRESTED 6 FOL REMAINING 6 AREA MATTEGWE GRID REF NH 2375.
53. CT DAVID MADZIBA ARRESTED AT LUPANE - IN POSSESSION OF PPSH, TOGAROV, HAND GRENADE AND LARGE AMOUNT OF CASH.
54. 2 BASE CAMPS AT NJ 200830 FOR 5 CT - ESTIMATE MADE NIGHT 03/04 SEP. TRACKS OF 5 CT MOVING IN EASTERLY DIRECTION ALONG SOUTH SIDE OF RIVER. WATER BOTTLES FOUND FILLED IN RIVER. 10 P1 D COY FOLLOWING UP.
55. CONTACT CT AT NJ 200800. 3 CT KILLED 1 O.N FORCE WOUNDED. EXPLOSIVES IN CAMP AND WILL ENTER WHEN DIE DOWN (041315) 1 SF KILLED.



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ANNEX A TO G/629C  
DATED 28 SEPTEMBER 1967

DEBRIEF OPERATION NICKEL

AGENDA

1. Chief of Staff address.
2. Commander 1 Brigade.
3. Lt Col Edwin J BAR.
4. Command and Control at Brigade/Sector/Province level.
5. Command and Control in the field at JOC level.
6. Intelligence.
7. Tactics.
8. Communications.
9. Weapons and Ammunition.
10. Logistics.
11. Casualty procedures.
12. New concepts (if any) arising from debrief.

Tea - 10.15

Tea - 15.15

Lunch - 13.00 to 14.00

Bar opens 16.30 and will be open during lunch period.

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DATED 27 SEPTEMBER 1967

OFFICERS WHO ATTENDED OPERATION NICKEL DEBRIEF1. Army HQ

Brig K.R. Coster OBE	C of S
Col R.H.B. Johnston TD, MB, ChB	DMS
Lt Col G.P. Walls MBE	GSO 1
Lt Col O.D. Mathews	CMG
Lt Col W.D. de Haast MBE	D Sigs
Maj N.I. Ormond	GSO 2 Ops
Maj E.G.R. Turner	DADOS
Maj J.E. Coaton	Sigs 4

2. HQ 1 Bde

Brig R.A.G. Prentice OBE, ADC	Chairman
Maj P.S. Forbes	FM
Maj A.B. Gamling	D.A. & QMG
Maj G.P. Lambert-Porter FM, IMSSA	SMD
Capt R.A. Carlick	RSQ
Capt M.G. Bowman	SO A
Capt R.E.M. Tarr	MIO
Capt J.L. Redfern	GSO 3 Ops (Secretary)
Capt K.R. Locke	TP MIO

3. Rh Sigs

Maj J. O'Connor	Comdt S Sigs
Capt H.G. Jaaback	CO J Tp
Lt R.A. Folocrelli	CO I Tp

4. 1 RAR

Lt Col W.I. Godwin OBE	CO
Maj E.A. Willar	2 IG
Maj J.R. Wells-West	CC HQ Coy
Maj B.R. Pond	CC B Coy
Maj A.H.I. Scott MS ChB	MIO
Capt P.J. Hosking	2 IG A Coy
Capt C.J. Castle	Asst
Capt F. Bowles RSM	MTO
Capt J.M. Templar	RSO
Capt C.J. du Pless	QM
Lt R.H. Inglis	Pl Comd
Lt T.C.D. Leaver	Pl Comd
Lt C.B. Piers	Pl Comd
Lt R.M. Matkovitch	Pl Comd
Lt I.P. Wardle	Pl Comd
Lt C.J. Dobson	JO
Lt D.C. Koch	Pl Comd
2 lt G.J.T. Noble	Pl Comd
2 lt B. Schlaeter	Pl Comd
2 lt F.J. Durcan	Pl Comd

5. 1 RLI

Capt G.A. Atkinson	2 IG 2 Cdo
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6. S Inf

Lt Col E.A. Gilbert	Comdt
Maj J.E. Smithyman	Chief Instr
Maj R.W. Southey	OC Tac Wing
Maj D.G. Parker	OC Cadet Wing

7. D RRR

Lt Col R.A. Edwards DSO, MC	OC
Maj J.L. Thompson	Chief Instr
Maj P.J. Daines	OC O Coy
Maj F.W. Kluckow	OC A Coy

8. 2 RRR

Lt Col K.G. Harvey DSO, MBE, ED	OC
---------------------------------	----

9. 1 (Indep) Coy RRR

Maj W.R. Godwin	OC
-----------------	----

10. 11 SF F1

Capt C. Thomas	OC
----------------	----

11. 12 SF F1

Lt G.V. Graham	Trg Offr
----------------	----------

12. OSD Byo

Capt W.A. Smith	OC
-----------------	----

13. Byo Wksps

Capt I. Wedderburn	OC
--------------------	----

14. RRAF

a. New Sarum

Gp Capt J.H. Deall DSO, OBE	SASO HQ RRAF
Sqn Ldr E.J. Brent DFC	
Sqn Ldr Rogers	
Sqn Ldr D.W. McLaughlin	

b. Thornhill

Wg Cdr M.J. McLaren	OC Flying Thornhill
Sqn Ldr C.W. Dams	
Sqn Ldr D. Butler	

15. BSAP

Snr Asst Comd P.D.W.R. Sherren	Prupri Matabeleland
Snr Asst Comd E.A. Oppenheim	
Asst Comd A. Bruce	
C/Supt M.J. Ogle	
C/Supt T. Thorpe	
C/Supt E. Sherriff	
C/Supt Holt	



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15. BSAP (Contd)

C/Supt P. Robinson  
Supt W. Buchanan  
Supt Gardner  
Supt A. Best  
Supt R. Hedges  
Det Insp Hankinson

16. Ministry of Internal Affairs

Mr M.C. Hagelthorn

Provincial Commissioner  
Matabeleland North.

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Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
5	6.8.67	Eastern Sector	Landrover recovered. Tracks followed and supply dump found. 13 Packs, RL, IMG, rifles large quantity ammunition, Chinese booby traps and explosives.	
6	7.8.67	Western Sector	1 Terrorist captured South of Wankie. Interrogation revealed he was one of gang of 6. 3 RSA-ANC 3 ZAPU. ANC heading for Johannesburg.	Plot on map
7	11.8.	Western Sector	1 Terrorist captured near Kariba	Plot on map
8	13.8.	Eastern Sector	1 Terrorist captured on train	
		Western Sector	During late afternoon during follow up of tracks Security Forces were ambushed and sustained.	
			Casualties (3 killed, 3 wounded). Security Forces were following tracks to Pongora MK520485 - Tsantada MK640450. Ambush took place at Tsantada	Plot on map
		Eastern Sector	1 Terrorist captured trying to cross back into Zambia. 3 Weapons recovered.	
9	14.8.	Western Sector	On follow up at Intunehla NK3303 4 Terrorist killed	
		Sector	1 wounded but died later. 1 Terrorist captured	Plot on map

Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
			by Railway Security guards. Interrogation revealed that of the group who ambushed Security Forces on 13 Aug 3 Terrorists were killed and 1 wounded. Also that 30 Terrorists crossed border on 31 Jul majority RSA-ANC headed for Johannesburg	
10	16.8.	Western Sector	1 Terrorist shot by Police at Figtree	Plot on map
		Eastern Sector	1 Terrorist captured. Interrogation revealed at least 9 returning to Zambia.	
11	17.8.	Western Sector	Reported by locals tracks of 2 Terrorists at MK850402: tracks of 4 terrorists at MK740180	Plot on map
			Resting place traced and quantity of ammunition found at MK770103. 9 Tracks seen at MK840023.	Plot on map
12	18.8.	Western Sector	A group of 15 terrorists engaged at MJ950880. 8 Terrorists killed, 6 captured, 1 escaped. Large quantities of ammunition and arms captured.	Plot on map
13	22.8.	Western Sector	9 at MJ740170 after attack 3 terrorists killed 3 wounded. Security forces: 1 It killed, 1 wounded, 1 It killed accidentally by own troops.	Plot on map

Indexno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan. of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
			b. 30 Tracks seen in area.	
			c. 1 Terrorist shot at MK410110	Plot on map
14	23.8.	Western Sector	At area a. serial 13, terrorists after an un- successful airstrike (not on target) by Hunter fighters attacked the Security Forces. 3 Terror- rists killed in this attack. 1 Terrorist captured with his weapons and equipment. Security Forces casualties: 1 Police officer killed, 1 Policeman wounded. 1 Soldier killed, 1 Officer and 6 other ranks wounded. It appears 2 Chinese men and 1 Chinese woman were leading this group. (Not yet confirmed)	
15	24.8.	Western Sector	At NJ0190 3 unarmed terrorists captured (2 local) Belong to group mentioned in serial 12. Interro- gation revealed the following: a. A group of 70 terrorists moved in one group to East of Grand Rapids on 11 Aug 67. They then split up into smaller groups before	Plot on map

Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan. of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
			crossing Zambesi.	
			b. The Terrorist shot at Figtree had been sent forward to contact a ZAPU member prior to the main group arriving.	
16	25.8.	Western Sector	4 Terrorists captured at QM700862.	Plot on map
17	26.8.	Western Sector	1 Terrorist captured in the area serial 16. after Security Forces had laid an ambush.	Plot on map.
			Summary of terrorist casualties for period beginning of Jun to 29 Aug 67.	
			In Rhodesia: (Both Sectors)	
			Killed : 23	
			Captured : 43	46
			In Botswana:	
			Captured : 13	
			Died of wounds : 1	14



Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan. of Van To or. From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
18	26.8.	Western Sector	One terrorist found dead at MJ742175. Terrorists still believed to be in area.	Plotted on map
19	26.8.	E Sector	Two unarmed terrorists captured at TR120150.	Plotted on map
20	27.8.	W Sector	Terrorists may have split up. 4 Terrorists arrested by Botswana Police area NH0379, 27/28 Aug 67. These terrorists confirmed as being members of the group involved in incident on 22.8.67. Serial No 13. Gang of + 70 crossed E of Katambora.	Plotted on map
			11 Aug 67. Split in Wankie area. Basil Febrary sent ahead as contact to RV with gps NH850350.	Plotted on map
			ANC terrorist then to RSA for trg locals. ZAPU for trg in area.	
21	27.8.	E Sector	1 ZAPU terrorist arrested Bindura UR230860. Only 5 terrorists now possible in area.	Plotted on map
22	28.8.	W Sector	2 Armed terrorists seen by civilians at NK330020. Asked directions to MJ840070. This river junction assumed to be terrorists RV.	Plotted on map



Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan. of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
24	30.8.		a. Geen waarheid in berigte van Radio SA se berig van 290800 Aug 67 van nuwe insypeling van terroriste in Rhodesië of bloedige gevegte nie.	
			b. Tot datum 17 terroriste in Botswana gevang. Meestal ANC lede.	
			c. Terroriste volg nuwe patroon vanuit Rhodesië na Botswana. Wpns word in of buite Botswana begrawe, burgerlike klere word gekoop en hulle poog om die RSA via Francistown te bereik. Die Botswana polisie is bewus hiervan en aktiewe patrolling word gedoen om infil-treerders op te spoor.	
			d. Terroriste verteenwoordigers beweer dat daar 4 Offre en 43 Mske <b>van</b> die RSA in Rhodesië is en dat die twee lande saamwerk.	







Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
30	011100 to 021100 Sep 67	Western Sector	Ptls and ambushes continue. Local residing at NH070855 said that he was approached by 4 terrorists incl a Chinaman ni 30/31 Aug. Asked food and water and gave him R10 (£5) to buy food. Arranged RV same place O11900B. Destination given as NH840340. Ambush laid. No contact and ptls sweeping S.	Plotted
31	021100 to 031100 Sep 67	Western Sector	Captured terrorist taken to ML297173 where he thinks he crossed - not sure. Ambush and sweep at NH070885. NTR. Sweep found empty hideout for 7 terrorists and two sets tracks crossing into Botswana. Botswana police reported on follow up. BSAP AC fired on by four terrorists area NH1080. Terrorists heading on bearing 165 mag. Moving openly, showing signs of defiance and bravado. Jonathan Moyo arrested at unstated place. Positively identified as ZAPU ldr and sole survivor of 24 in first action against SF 13 Aug. Suspected major	Plotted



Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan of Van To or From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
33	011100	Western	1 Unarmed terrorist captured at NH090980. He had no pack. Info that rest of gang was 3 miles SE of 2 CDO RLI posn.	Plotted
	to	Sector		
	011100		Pt from 2 CDO and D Coy RAR sent to area. Found tracks and contacted 7 terrorists at NH080977 at 1235 hrs. 4 Terrorists killed. 1 European soldier slightly wounded. Terrorists not yet identified. Suspect arrested at NH790560. Being interrogated. Grassland between E Coy posn and Tegwani River being burnt 1 Sep. Ptls continue, also ambushes on kraals and stores of suspected contacts and known sympathisers. Terrorists known to be listening to RBC/SABC news on transistors. Tactics for ambushes incl leaving trail then making hairpin turn to bush. Troop in follow up.	
34	041100	Western	3 Terrorists killed by 10 pl RAR 041325 at NJ200800	Plotted
	to	Sector	Own cas, 1 RAR dead, 1 RAR wounded. Terrorists identified as deserters from main gp 3 days after	
	051100	(Pantaloon)		



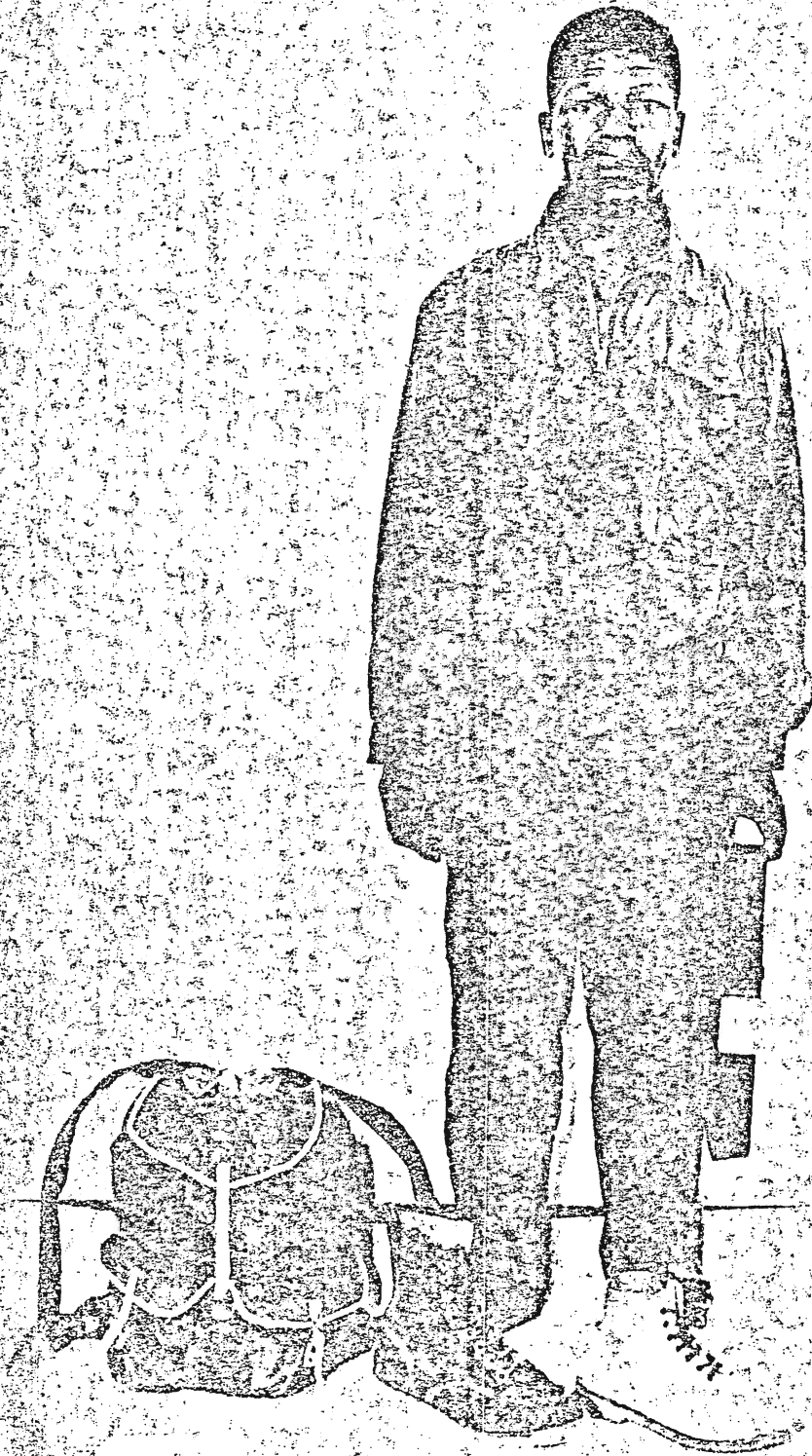
Reeksno Serial	Tyd Time	Aan. of Van To or. From	Gebeurtenis/Event	Nodige Optrede Nec Action
35	301100 to 311100 Aug 67	Western Sector	2 ZAPU terrorists captured 30 Aug at NH400940. 1 ZAPU terrorist captured 31 Aug at NH090980. All unarmed. Stated that they left main gp ± 20 strong as fanatical and determined to fight through to SA. Tracks of main gp followed throughout the day.	Plotted Plotted. See serial 33.
36		Western Sector	Hideout found NHO47993 - night 29/30 Aug. Grey flannels and bloodstained KD (khaki drill?) shorts found in area. Tracks moved NE and followed by 10 and 11 pls. Tracks difficult to follow as terrorists splitting up and then re-grouping. Terrorist direction confusing but appear using Tegwani River as guide line.	Plotted





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Appendix A

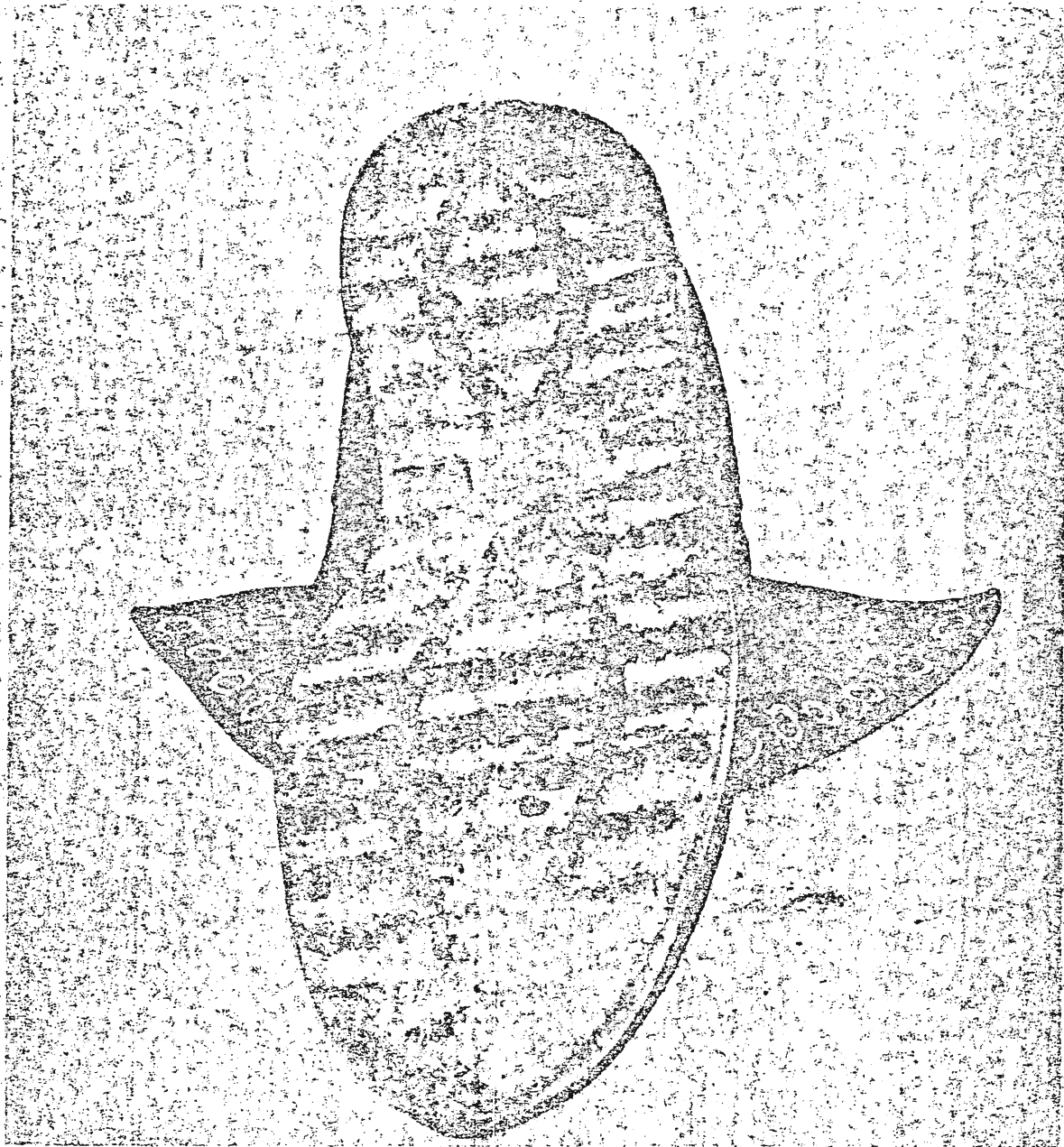


1. UNIFORM, KAKIEKLEURIGE RUGSAK EN STEWELS WAT AAN TERRORISTE UITGEREIK WORD.
2. DIE UNIFORM IS TUSSEN GROEN EN LIGGROEN VAN KLEUR, DOG IN SOMMIGE GEVALLE VERSKIL DIE LYFBAND VAN DIE EEN WAT IN DIE LINKERHAND VAN DIE TERRORIS GESIEN KAN WORD.
3. TERRORISTE WORD GEWOONLIK MET TWEE PAAR STEWELS UITGEREIK.
4. DIT SAL OPGEMERK WORD DAT HULLE OOK VAN MEKAAR VERSKIL.
5. 'N AFBEELDING VAN EEN VAN ELKE PAAR WORD OP DIE VOORGROND HIERBO AANGETOON.

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Appendix B

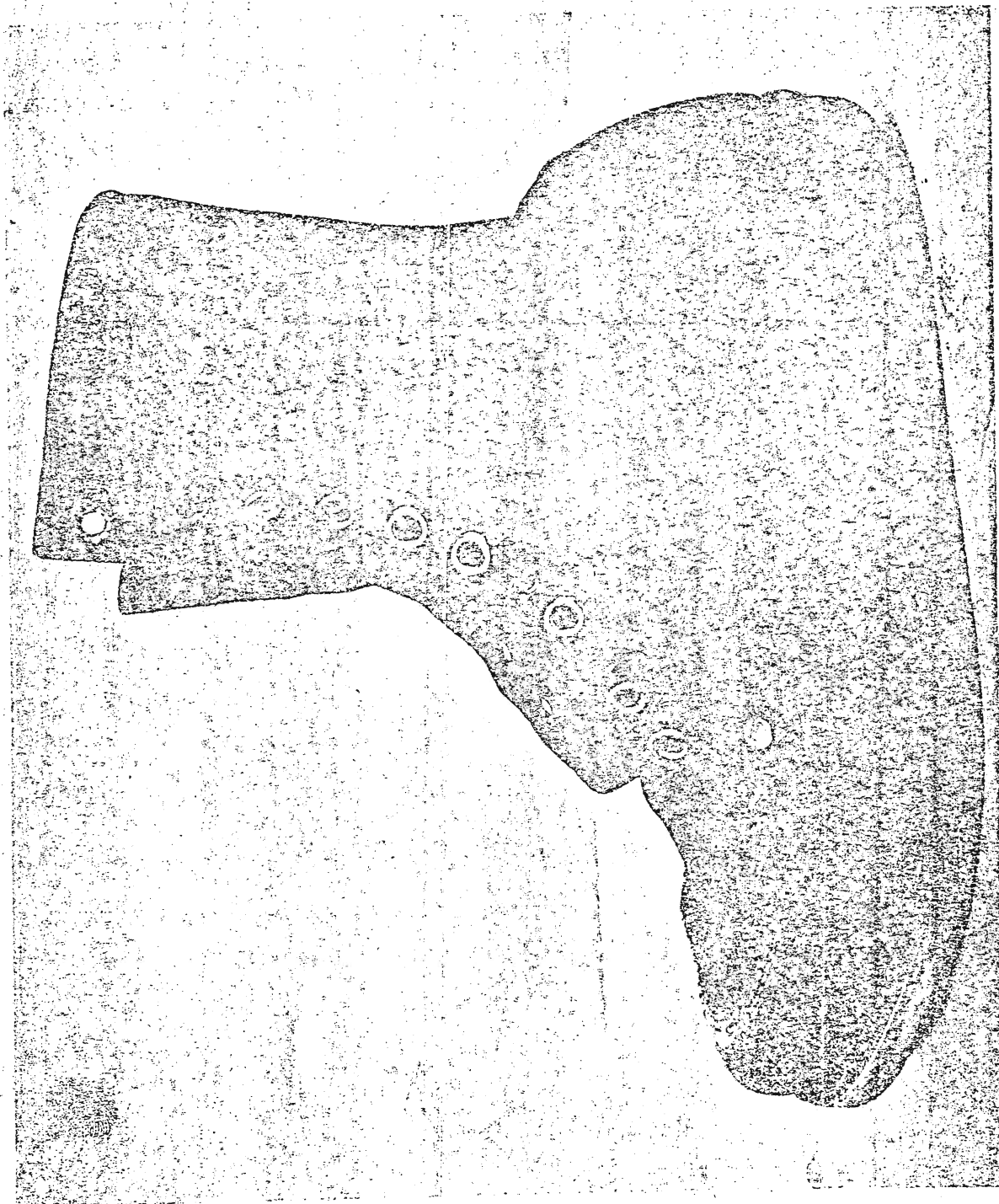


IN AFBEELDING VAN DIE SOOL VAN STEWELS WAT AAN TERRORISTE UITGEREIK WORD.  
DIT IS VAN COMLASTIEK VERYAARDIG.

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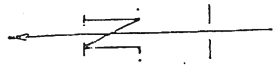
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Appendix C



SECRET

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TJC

TOLOTO TRIBAL TRUST LAND

NATA TRIBAL TRUST LAND

KOOLKAS

KSONA

MANDALAYAN RIVER

WISSE'S STORE

LIBESI

SIKHOE

TSEMWOI

RIVER

NINTIA

(E)

DINCIMADWA

(F)

SGULIKASII

(B)

ENGOLICH

(G)

MANDALAYAN RIVER

NATA MUD FLATS

(D)

(A)

MUD FLATS

TRASSI

SIMAY

SAMON

(E)

KEY TO PLAN.

A = Denotes clearing in bush as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI on 18.11.1968 as the spot where an engagement allegedly took place on 23.8.1967 between Rhodesian Security Forces and a group of terrorists of which he was a member. This spot was pointed out to me in the presence of D/S/Officer N. S. F. HARTLEY.

B = Denotes donga as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI on 18.11.1968 along which he and other members of his group allegedly walked shortly after the engagement on 23.8.1967.

*Success  
the Code  
of the code  
was found*

C = Denotes spot in donga "B" as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI on 18.11.1968 as a place where he and other members of his group allegedly concealed certain firearms and equipment seized from Security Force members during the engagement on 23.8.1967.

D = Denotes spot in donga "B" as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI where he and other members of his group allegedly crossed shortly after the engagement on 23.8.1967.

E = Denotes SITHOLE's shop at Dalakibila as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI on 18.11.1968, where he and other members of his group allegedly were given shelter a few days after the engagement on 23.8.1967.

*found 3  
top  
of bush  
found  
y  
life  
at night  
after*

F = Denotes a spot south-east of store "E", as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI on 18.11.1968, in the presence of D/S/Officer N. S. F. HARTLEY, as a spot where he and other members of his group allegedly concealed their firearms and equipment a few days after the engagement on 23.8.1967.

G = Denotes a spot west of store "E", as pointed out by witness LEONARD MANDELA NKOSI on 18.11.1968 in the presence of D/S/Officer N. S. F. HARTLEY, as a spot where he and other members of his group concealed their automatic pistols and handgrenades a few days after the engagement on 23.8.1967.

DISTANCES.

- A - B = About 1 1/2 miles.
- C - D = About 1 mile.
- A - E = About 17 miles.
- E - F = About 400 yards.
- E - G = About 50 yards.

*Madu*

AANTEKENINGSBLAD/MINUTE SHEET

SUMMARY OF EVENTS, CODEWORDS AND MEANINGS

1. Security Force Operations

- a. NICKEL. Commenced for whole Rhodesia Aug 67.
- b. NICKEL 1. Division of Nickel using Nickel JOC responsible for NE half.
- c. NICKEL 2. Division of Nickel responsible for SW half. JOC estb 3 Sep 67
- d. NICKEL. Was Nickel 1 JOC closes 8 Sep 67.
- e. PANTALOON. Became new code word for Nickel 2. JOC closes down. 5 Oct 67.

COMMENT: This ended first operation by sec force

- f. BONFIRE. Second op NE half JOC estb 2 Jan 68 and closes 9 Jan 68.
- g. BREEZE. Second op SW half JOC estb 3 Jan 68 and closes 10 Jan 68.

COMMENT: End of second op

- h. BUNKUM. JOC estb 10 Jan 68 closes 13 Jan 68. False alarm visitor Mahun area.

2. Border Control Ops

- a. LETTUCE. Con NE half
- b. ISOTOPE. Con SW half. JOC closes 19 Sep 67 and LETTUCE is code word for all border con ops
- c. CARDIGAN. Replaces LETTUCE wef 1 Feb 68

GENERAL COMMENT. First op it would appear that 82 out of 86 terrs were accounted for. Second op all 18 accounted for.

RAG/210/3/11  
July 1968 Kappate  
Rhodesia  
Volume 1

Ops  
As at 2610003 Jan 68



SUMESPRAWINGS OP 4 SEP 67  
TUSSEN BRIG DILLON KOL VAN  
RENSBURG EN KOMDT SWART

(23)

1. Brig Dillon deel mee dat Kol vander Berg (SAP) met Gerst Winster bemaatskapig het. Die volgende berigte spreek uit die bemaatskapig:-
  - a. Die voorrade wat op die goedgekeurde lysste verskyn moet ook in die meende versprei word. Die EM het nie die indak stap dat Rhod lles hande word nie.
  - b. Geen voorrade word versend voordat die EM daarvan kennis is nie.
  - c. Brig Dillon veel outways in versending.
  - d. Bew was moontlik deel trein.
  - e. Twee Paketes wat gereed moet wees vir sending moet SAP wapen en nommers SAP 200 en SAP 201 of slaga die nommers of CO.
  - f. Ses LESSONS vertrek Wansday (4 Sep). Vliegplan vanday (5 Sep)
  - g. Alle pers sal in SAP uniform gedra gaan.
  - h. Stofoffe of vir op Sena uit.
  - i. 12 Paketes mag nodig wees. Kan slegs gaan as Pol daarvoor oore. Wat kennis betref:-
    - (i) Rhodesia moet ook in kennis van Swaas oph word.
    - (ii) Wanneer Paketes gaan wil Pol en op be-



j. Geel od Bergh sal EM se goedkeuring  
van die enige behoeftes tot bloed.

l. Wrede moet wees maentlik versydel word.

m. Die Debatte wat op 5 Sept son vertrek  
moet in die jaar nie.

n. Alle pers uit SA moet tot wees  
behalwe wees tot die rol nie  
kan vol nie. Dan mag elke  
pers optred maas in tot uniform.

o. 6 Debatte in pers (minimaal) kan  
kies HUK stig. 44 kan met 199  
uitwek kan word.

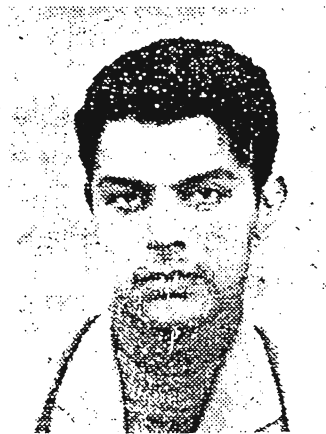
HB 6/9/67

Blk is heeren verantw om 0830-woke 6/9.

Volgens afspraak word debatte aspekte om  
0830-uit aan SAH (King Terson) en 1000-uit aan  
SA lei (Kod Kuyperstein) oorgedra. Daarna sal  
HHD en 44 aan die best kan. to

pt 6/9.

# Heroic Guerilla



BASIL FEBRUARY

'A revolutionary dedicates himself to the cause of a better life... A revolutionary loves life and he knows that life does not end when he himself dies.' These are the words of the heroic guerilla, Basil February who died in combat on his way to the South African battlefield during the Wankie Campaign in 1967-'68. A leading member of the Luthuli Combat Detachment of Umkhonto, he was a great fighter, whose single-handed resistance when surrounded by the enemy lasted more than two hours. He fell in this battle — after many other encounters with the enemy — having inflicted heavy losses on the racist soldiers. Basil was born in Somerset West and he was a medical student at the Cape Town University when he left the country.

PICK UP HIS WEAPON!!

**Continue the freedom march!**

SALUTE OUR HERO



*Albert He... 55*

Basil February

"A revolutionay dedicates himself to the cause of a better life . . ."