The Cheetah

Magazine of the
Rhodesian Light Infantry Regimental Association

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Greetings to all our members wherever this edition may find you,

The last year has seen yet another book published about the RLI's History, with the production of “Africa's Commandos”, and in this regard I thank both Chris Cocks and Mark Adams for all their efforts. Also thanks go to all the contributors who dug back into their memories to recall their past in our great Regiment. It was a really well produced book and I am sure will be well appreciated by military historians.

All the branches continue to grow in number, and it is particularly pleasing to see the expansion of the Australia/New Zealand Branch, who had a successful ANZAC Day event in Brisbane in April this year. Also, it is good to see that some of the breakaways are rejoining the official Branch in Australia; this is great, as we want a united global RLIRA.

The UK Branch again held its Remembrance Day Parade in Bedford, which I was able to attend, and it was great to meet up with some ouens who I had not seen for over 30 years. As previously it was opened up to all former Rhodesian Forces, and the total marchers were just in excess of 200, the large majority being RLIRA. The function the night before and the lunch afterwards were well supported and their proximity to our Museum made it a most successful get-together.

The Museum continues to grow under the watchful eye of Martyn Hudson and his team. They have revamped some of the displays as well as documenting all the material we hold and who donated it. Although there are no immediate plans to move it, we are looking at some options for the future.

Our next major function will be our 55th Anniversary in 2016, and we need to look at whether we continue to have separate branch Anniversary Reunions or look at having a Global one at a central location for all three branches. Anyway this is open for ideas and suggestions, and if anyone thoughts on this matter let myself, the CEO or your Branch Chairman know, and the ExCo will investigate.

Best wishes to you all and hopefully the Association will continue to expand and grow.

*May the Saints keep Marching On*

Ian Buttenshaw
Chairman RLIRA
Welcome

Firstly my apologies, as this is the first cheetah for quite sometime; unfortunately, somewhere between August last year and today, life intervened, leaving me precious little time. I am afraid, to compile a magazine.

As you will see, however, the branches have been active and people working hard behind the scenes to ensure our members derive benefits and enjoy the company of fellow soldiers.

New material

I have been concerned for some time in regard to the format and content of the cheetah and raised it with you all in an edition last year. The stark reality hit home when chatting to an old mate who said ‘I am a bit RLI’ed out’; meaning with the latest book and reunions he probably had had his fill of war stories.

I must say I often feel the same, and whilst our get-togethers will always be nostalgic and it is great to catch-up there may be a time when we want some new material.

For this edition I have hence sourced some new content, which I hope you find interesting.

A very real issues

I was heartened to see the Gauteng branch take the initiative and host a number of presentations and discussions on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

It is inevitable that being a soldier, it was and is not considered masculine to even discuss mental condition; somehow people have always sit considered it to a ‘soft topic’ one that real men should be able to handle. It wasn’t until I investigated the disorder did I realize that it will never leave you; that combat soldiers have always suffered from it, and the depth of the problem is not the same as everyone else who has suffered trauma. One only has to reflect on one’s personal experience or those of others; everyone in the RLI, especially when on fire force, or on an external was in mortal danger. This was unavoidable and clearly had its effects. As I understand it, with people so young; whose neurological functions are still being formed, this stress and resulting action indelibly re-wired the brain. No matter how many years pass, you will live with it, sometimes unknowingly.

I think the RLIRA , by acknowledging the disorder and being involved with organizations such as the Shamwari trust are doing their bit to help wherever they can.

New projects

It does strike me that the RLIRA has in its members a vast array of information and knowledge about warfare and its effects on people (good and bad).

In the Chairman’s opening remarks he indicated that military historians will welcome the new book edited Mark and Chris. I concur with that; but I also think we have another great treasure; not in the deeds of soldiering but rather in the effects of soldiering and combat on life itself.

Ian Macfarlane
Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, KG, GCB, DSO.

Montgomery was born in Kennington, London. His father was a deeply religious man and his mother very strict. His upbringing could be described as disciplined and strict - in the classic Victorian style of his social class. Undoubtedly, this upbringing contributed to his aloofness in later life. Montgomery threw himself into sports and was a natural sportsman and was always seeking to be a leader of men.

After school, he went to Sandhurst to train in the army. He graduated and was sent to the North West frontier of India. Slowly, he became more thoughtful about the way to get on with fellow officers, but he never lost his ability to be argumentative with others.

On the outbreak of war in 1914, Montgomery found himself in the first battle of Ypres. He conducted himself with great bravery - nearly dying after leading a bayonet charge on enemy lines. By 1918 he was a lieutenant colonel - an impressive achievement for the age of 30. He was critical of the First World War generals, such as Douglas-Haig, for their seeming indifference to casualty figures. He later commented:

"The frightful casualties appalled me. The so-called "good fighting generals" of the war appeared to me to be those who had a complete disregard for human life. There were of course exceptions and I suppose one was Plumer; I had only once seen him and I had never spoken to him."

At the end of the war, Montgomery continued his career in the military. In 1927, he also married a widow - Betty Carver, with whom he had one son. The marriage was happy for Monty given a rare period of emotional closeness. Tragically, his wife died in 1937, after an insect bite turned septic.

In the Second World War, Montgomery was elevated to Commander of the Eighth army in Egypt. In 1942, Britain had always been on the back foot in the war. About the best the Allies could claim were successful tactical retreats like Dunkirk, or holding the enemy as in the Battle of Britain; but, on the land, the army had few real victories to shout about. In the African theatre, Monty's adversary Rommel was gaining near mythical status (amongst both German and British soldiers) about his seeming invincibility.

"I want to impose on everyone that the bad times are over, they are finished! Our mandate from the Prime Minister is to destroy the Axis forces in North Africa...It can be done, and it will be done! " - Montgomery spoke to his troops.

After beating off a German attack in August, Monty was able to deliver a successful counter attack in November. It was a decisive victory for the allies and was celebrated in Britain. It was said, that before, El-Alamein – the allies never had a victory, but, after El-Alamein they never had defeat. It was not quite as simple as that, but it was a crucial turning point in the balance of power in the Second World War.

This famous victory elevated the status of Monty. He already had a certain 'cult' status amongst the mass of army recruits. They admired his somewhat unorthodox and eccentric habits. - For example, the way he dressed and his disdain for tiresome military procedures.

Whilst we may criticize and surmise, it is true that the army, has given birth to great leaders; people who have demonstrably taken on responsibility in the adversity, and in great hardship and succeeded.

I hope you find these articles on a few great leaders, including a few of our own, informative and inspiring.
In 1944, after much preparation, the Allies finally launched their long awaited invasion of Western Europe landing on the Normandy beeches. During the long drive East towards Germany, Monty often clashed with the Allied supreme Commander American, General Eisenhower. Monty was keen for a decisive single blow on one part of the front. Eisenhower wanted a broader general advance.

Even so, the American was most courteous toward his British counterpart, stating after the war;

"General Montgomery is a very able, dynamic type of army commander. I personally think that the only thing he needs is a strong immediate commander. He loves the limelight but in seeking it, it is possible that he does so only because of the effect upon his own soldiers, who are certainly devoted to him. I have great confidence in him as a combat commander. He is intelligent, a good talker, and has a flare for showmanship. Like all other senior British officers, he has been most loyal - personally and officially - and has shown no disposition whatsoever to overstep the bounds imposed by allied unity of command. " General Dwight D. Eisenhower, diary entry (11 June 1943)

To some extent, Monty did have his opportunity with operation Market Garden - a daring paratrooper drop, deep into enemy territory. It was hoped this would enable an early capture of important Rhine bridgeheads and speed up the war. Unfortunately, the plan was overly optimistic and the ambitious targets were not achieved. He later blamed a combination of factors such as lack of support, bad weather and unexpected resistance.

"Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and

Confident

When Montgomery was asked which three generals he admired most. He answered with his customary precision - “the other two would be Alexander the Great and Napoleon.”

Critical

Montgomery's memoirs (1958) criticised many of his wartime comrades in harsh terms, including Eisenhower, whom he accused, among other things, of prolonging the war by a year, through poor leadership — allegations which ended their friendship, not least, as Eisenhower was still US President at the time. He was threatened with legal action by Field-Marshall Auchinleck for suggesting that Auchinleck had intended to retreat from the Alamein if attacked again, and had to give a radio broadcast (20 November 1958) expressing his gratitude to Auchinleck for having stabilised the front at the First Battle of Alamein.
Leadership: short stories and anecdotes: J. C. Lord

The first time I ever heard of J.C. Lord was when my old OC, Dick Lockley, was reminiscing about his days at Sandhurst; he spoke in glowing terms of the Academy Sergeant Major and the significant influence had had on all cadets,

I thought the following would be of interest

**John Clifford Lord** was born on the 26th April 1908 in Southport, Lancashire. He joined the Grenadier Guards in March 1933 for a four year engagement. During a posting to Egypt he played rugby for the United Services and was promoted to Lance Sergeant. On discharge he joined the Brighton Police Force before being recalled to the Army at the outbreak of war in 1939. He was posted to the OCTU at Sandhurst as Sergeant Instructor, before being promoted to CSM of the Cadet Company. He remained at Sandhurst until October 1941, when on the formation of the 3rd Parachute Battalion he was posted to become its first RSM. He undertook his parachute training at RAF Ringway, qualifying on the 30 November 1941.

He accompanied his Battalion to Tunisia in 1942 and took part in the attack on Primosole in Sicily on the night of the 13 July 1943. Having been part of the seaborne operation to land at Taranto Harbour between the 12 and 14 September 1943, he returned to the UK with other members of the 1st Parachute Brigade. On returning to the UK, his unit set up camp at Limehurst, Spalding, in Lincolnshire.

On 17 September 1944, the Battalion dropped at part of Operation Market Garden. On the 21 September, RSM Lord was captured having been wounded and sent to Stalag XIB where he took control of the camp. Conditions in the camp were poor but RSM Lord set about maintaining military discipline and boosting morale within the camp. On liberation of the camp on the 27 April 1945, Major Ralph Cobbold of the Coldstream Guards described finding a guard with a maroon beret and “thought that the 6th Airborne Division must somehow have got there first”. On enquiring to the guard commander when they had arrived, he received the reply “Just after Arnhem, Sir”. He goes on, “then a majestic figure appeared, the RSM himself, with gleaming brass, immaculate webbing, razor-edged trouser creases, dazzling boots, a spectacular salute

On reviewing the camp they were impressed that despite poor conditions, overcrowding and undernourishment, the camp was well ordered and run with military efficiency.

During his imprisonment RSM Lord had been offered the chance to move to an NCOs’ camp where conditions were better but had refused in order to lead his men. Towards the end of his imprisonment, men were being marched off. RSM Lord hid underneath the floorboards for five days, being fed through a hole while guards searched for him. When he emerged he continued his leadership of the Stalag until he could hand over to the advancing British Army. At liberation, he stayed until all his men had been evacuated back to Britain.

For his excellent service during the war and his outstanding leadership in Stalag XIB, he was made a Member of the British Empire. The recommendation for his award records:

"RSM Lord joined the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment as RSM on its first formation in September 1941, and held this appointment until he was wounded and captured at Arnhem in September 1944. During this period he has earned himself a great reputation in his Battalion and in the 1st Parachute Brigade. At the beginning it was largely due to this Warrant Officer's drive and character that men from over fifty different Regiments were soon welded into a first class Battalion with a fine Esprit de Corps. RSM Lord served with distinction throughout the North African campaign in the winter of 1942/1943 and his gallantry in action was always an example to the Battalion. During a difficult period, which followed, caused by certain changes in command, it was largely due to this Warrant Officer's unwavering loyalty and devotion to duty that the Battalion was unaffected. J Later, he fought with gallantry in Sicily and at Arnhem, where he was wounded and taken prisoner. Ultimately he was sent to Stalag XIB where he soon showed himself to be the outstanding personality of the Camp and where he did fine work in maintaining a high state of morale amongst the prisoners. The excellent bearing and turnout of the prisoners astonished officers and men arriving at the Camp."

I thought the following would be of interest
Following a period of leave he was posted to the No 1 (PR) Infantry Training Centre as RSM before joining the new Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as RSM, New College, in August 1947. In July 1948 he became the RSM of the Academy until December 1960, when his post was upgraded to Academy Sergeant Major.

His status was such that he was made the subject of a 'This is Your Life' programme compered by Eamonn Andrews and aired on 30 November 1959.

He retired in August 1963 having held the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 for 22 years, as the senior RSM in the British Army. It was widely rumoured by his subordinates that his initials, JC stood for Jesus Christ. On the 8 June 1963 he was appointed an MVO (5th Class).

He died at his home in Camberley on the 21 January 1968. His medal set can be seen at the Airborne Assault Museum.

by Rebecca Skinner

**ANECDOTES AND ACCOUNTS**

The Academy Sergeant Major was often telephoned in his office by various officers; normally the Adjutant, or Assistant Adjutant. In discussion in the Mess one day they both remarked that having announced to him who was on the telephone, there would be a short sharp swishing sound from the other end. Baffled by what it might be the Adjutant suggested that the Assistant Adjutant should position himself outside the Academy Sergeant Major's window--while he himself put through a telephone call. Later when the Assistant Adjutant reported what he had seen, it transpired that in response to the Adjutant's "Good morning Mr. Lord" the Academy Sergeant Major replied, "Good morning sir", snapped to attention and saluted! What an example of discipline." - quoted in 'To Revel in God's Sunshine; The story of the Army career of the late [Sandhurst] Academy Sergeant Major J.C. Lord, MVO, MBE', compiled by Richard Alford

[North Africa, 1943] "The fighting here was very heavy and many casualties occurred. My Sergeant was Allen Watson and he would often ask me to accompany him on patrols, these were extremely dangerous and I would not have been with anyone else. Later when I was positioned about two hundred feet up on the side of Green Hill, the Germans had launched their usual dawn attack causing many wounded, and I received a chest wound. The medical orderlies were unable to evacuate the wounded quickly as the ground was so precarious when hauling stretchers. The Company Commander therefore ordered all walking wounded to make their own way to a gully below, where they would be collected and taken to headquarters situated about a quarter of a mile away. I was bleeding rather badly so holding a field dressing to my chest I decided to make my way down to the gully. I rolled and staggered to the bottom of the hill, and then after a pause to readjust the dressing and check direction, went on my way. My progress was rather a stoop--stagger--and rest. Moving towards the headquarters I had not been mobile for long when I was abruptly halted by a roar, "Corporal Sheriff--if you can't walk in a soldierly manner--lay down!" Naturally I quickly obliged and I saw RSM Lord standing over me. As he was carrying a sten gun in his right hand I thought he might just shoot me. "What's your trouble Corporal?" he asked. I replied that I had a chest wound, hoping vainly for some show of sympathy. John Lord glanced me up and down for a brief moment then said "You haven't shaved this morning Corporal", "No sir, I admitted, "I didn't have time as the Germans attacked at dawn." There was a pause as 'J.C.' [Lord] growled that this was no excuse, but he then softened, suddenly stooped and made me comfortable and handed me a cigarette. He then went away to find a couple of men to carry me in, and still affected by the confrontation, I was laying in a position of attention and smoking by numbers when he returned. As we waited he spoke of the days gone by and of the many men of the battalion who were now missing." - Corporal Ray Sheriff, 3rdBattalion, The Parachute Regiment; quoted in To Revel in God's Sunshine;
Leadership: short stories and anecdotes: ‘Our own’

The RLI was blessed with a number of incredible leaders, many of whom went about their tasks quietly and yet with unbelievable effectiveness; may I suggest people like; Derek Stokes (1 Cdo), Trevor Hodgson (2 Cdo), Mike Kerr (Sp. Gp., as it was when he was there), Derek Taylor (3 Cdo) and many more; men who inspired others and who led by example. No doubt there will be opinions and disagreements on each and everyone; views will be contradictory; yet, is it not true that leaders are often polarizing?

I hope you enjoy this extract from the ‘Africa Commandos’ book, reproduced with permission.

Men of principle; men who served to lead

"God grant that men of principle shall be our principal men."— Thomas Jefferson

Introduction

The chronicles of the RLI are laden with stories of ordinary soldiers who did extra-ordinary things; of character and personality forged by values and deeds; of the historic soldiering tradition; all shaped by men of quality, people who saw their role of getting their men to be the best that they could be.

As we all well know, leadership is an extremely difficult concept to define and understand; let alone to execute. For millennia, learned people have attempted to unlock its key ingredients and yet their theses ring hollow, devoid of meaning and poor in articulation.

It is almost as if there is a peculiar mix of innate qualities, charisma, dedication and the like which fuse in an unexplained process to create true leaders; people who fulfill their role more effectively than others because in their world leadership is not defined as a ‘means’ toward pursuing their own goals but rather as an ‘end in itself’; they are people who, genuinely ‘served to lead’ (1)

Whilst I am not in a position to comment on all leaders that graced the ranks of our regiment, I have heard and read enough to suggest that the regiment was blessed with an amazing continuous leadership lineage. ‘Men who walked in the footsteps of those who had gone before’ (2); built on the legacy of others, without attempting to destroy it and placed their indelible mark on what, ultimately, was their creation.

This is a story of just 2 of these men.

I am extremely grateful to have served with Lt. Col. Dave Parker and Lt. Col. Peter Rich.

Context. In the chronological order of things, these two leaders were uniquely positioned.

They led the Battalion crucially between its formative and development phase through its operational phase before it migrated to its operationally independent commando phase.

Leadership: 1973 – 1976

The first time I ever heard the nickname ‘The King’ was in Mt Darwin at Forward Head Quarters of the RLI in August 1974. I had been in the regiment for precisely three days having been posted to the Battalion as a newly commissioned national service officer from the School of Infantry. The conveyor of this and other ‘cultural’ nuances, that day, was Lt. Tim (Bung) Bax, who was acting Intelligence Officer.

It wasn’t long before I met Lt. Col Dave Parker in person, at a lunch later that day in the officer’s mess. He welcomed us (Jim Moubray, a fellow course graduate, who joined with me), to the regiment. We spent the next hour or so quietly watching his engagement with the other officers who had joined us for lunch.

I was immediately struck by his presence, a distinguished man he certainly had an imposing frame, and although not loud, he dominated the room. He had a superb rapport with the officers, especially the juniors, and it was clear to me that there was a strong mutual respect between them all.

Toward Jim and me, he was engaging but aloof (understandably) and I took this as a sign that one needed to earn his respect and that could only come after we had earned our stripes.

I was proved to be right. Fortunately, for me I did not have to wait too long. Within three weeks, 1 Commando was on fire force and on the second day, when my troop was on first wave we were called to a sighting, which resulted in contact. Whilst, not too successful, as a direct consequence of the G cars landing us without instruction from the K car, were all out of position and it took some time to get us to the enemy location albeit with a few skirmishes along the way.
On returning to base camp, the King came right up to me and congratulated me on my contact. ‘I see you have some gun-powder in your nostrils’ was the exact opening remark. He took time out and spoke to me about the air force putting us down in the wrong place and explained he had a debrief with Maj. Lockley and the air force to ensure that it would not happen again.

Dick later explained how annoyed he was but how controlled and diplomatic Dave Parker had been during the de-brief, leaving everyone happy with the outcome, sure in the understanding of the RLI’s requirements from then on out. The King did remark to me that night that ‘this was still early fire force days and things would settle down’

Over the next 18 months or so, and particularly after I had signed on as a regular officer we had greater and more regular contact. He was never ill tempered, always accommodating, considered, firm when he needed to be, proud, never interfering with the command of his subordinates (well, visibly anyway). He worked through people, ensuring their positions were never undermined.

On Skyde Row (3) he was revered; he remembered everything about us, our interests and motivations, he was well aware of our families and our concerns. I recall two examples that had a profound effect on me; when he met my father (a Territorial officer on deployment in the Mt. Darwin area), he took time to chat to him and spoke to him of my decision to become a regular officer and how pleased he was that I had made the decision; secondly, he personally broke the news to us (subalterns) of Norman Steins’ death and chatted with a compassionate understanding of losing a friend.

Inside the velvet glove though was a hand of steel; when junior officers stepped out of line, he was firm and swift in dealing with them. Needless to say, few ever transgressed once the consequences were evidenced!

During his time as CO, Dave Parker often had at least two if not three of the Commandos under his operational control. The Battalion operated as a unit and he had the sound judgment to arrange and have Authorized the congregation of the battalion for its birthday celebrations in February 1975, and also for the acceptance of the Freedom of the city of Salisbury. These symbolic gestures forged relationships within the regiment and ensured the potentially frayed bonds, caused by fractured operational commitments were strengthened.

During his stewardship the operational effectiveness of the RLI and those who fought alongside us, like the air force was brought to full force and effect. His diplomacy and planning acumen ensured he had huge respect in the other services and forces.

There is no doubt that without his leadership the RLI could not have achieved what it did. His death, on operations, was a tragedy of huge proportion; it robbed the Army of one of its finest officers and one who was destined to play a significant role in Rhodesian outcome.

Who’s next?

One can only imagine the discussions, debates and disagreements between those in Army Headquarters and 2 Brigade who had to decide Dave Parker’s replacement.

Thank heavens. Whoever the faceless men were. They chose wisely by appointing Peter Rich, then Brigade Major of 1 Brigade to the position.

I came to know Peter Rich extremely well, firstly as the RLI’s Intelligence Officer where I worked with him daily for over 8 months and then as G3 Operations during Peter’s appointment as Colonel and 2ic of 3 Brigade.

In character he was entirely different to ‘The King’; a stoic man’s man, ever inch a raw and astute soldier with a common touch, an individual who possessed behind that austere exterior a wonderfully kind heart and an unbelievably quick and agile brain.

Supremely confident, Col Rich did the job his way and as a result garnered the support of the entire Battalion, in a very short time. Like Col Parker he had served with the regiment many times and over a long period, preparing it for what it now faced.
He was a superb delegator and only got involved when people were obviously out of their depth. He did not suffer fools gladly and over time, he surrounded himself with accomplished officers; people who shared his passion and zest for life and soldiering.

On so many occasions, his unfailing loyalty and extensive network of officer friends, ensured capable subordinates continued in the roles when others would have relented and seen the subordinate ‘put to the sword’. I personally evidenced this and I am sure, to this day, those officers have no idea that either they were in serious trouble or that Col Rich intervened to save their hides.

Col Rich’s in-depth understanding of paratroop operations and the requirements to ensure maximum effectiveness of fire force contacts paved the way for the regiment’s migration into the para-borne era. The fact that these operations became so successful is a credit to his foresight and determination.

The Battalion’s loss was 3 brigade’s good fortune. It was here that an almost entire staff contingent of RLI officers and NCOs graced the corridors of this very operational brigade. Col Rich’s professionalism and acumen won him significant support with the citizens when the city was mortared. Ever calm and confident he just went about this task with little drama giving everyone a sense of order and quiet proficiency

**Review**

These, quite different men; one the private school educated man the other a raw astute soldiers soldier, were Officers of stature. They, in their different ways typified what it was to be an RLI commando.

They espoused confidence and set in play a series of initiatives, which allowed the regiment and all their men to be successful.

The fact that success came along with pride and commitment is a credit to their leadership and an acknowledgement of their character.

May they both rest in peace and with our thanks

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(1): Motto of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

(2): Prelude to ‘When the saints go marching in’ by Bruce Springsteen

(3) The name and colloquialism given to junior officers in residence of the RLI officer’s mess

Men of principle:

Dave Parker (above) and Peter Rich (Below)
The following articles give some idea of how people do and are suffering from this disorder.

Barry Zworenstein, an ex-Rhodesian, a practicing psychologist in Sydney; an authority on the condition wrote this article (for those who may have seen it), which Mark Adams posted on Facebook; it is worth re-publishing.

You will also find an article on the ‘Battling Bare’ campaign, which shows that whilst service men and women may be affected there is also a significant cost to family members and friends who equally suffer the consequences of a PTSD. The article shows just what can be accomplished by a few people using the power of social media.

We can only implore the Shamwari trust and/or the association to collate data on potential sufferers within our ranks and take appropriate action to ensure, even after so many years, that

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

There is no doubt that to train as a soldier and to be involved in combat can be traumatically stressful and have far reaching effects on one’s living, relationships, mental state and well-being. However it is possible that to see war and to think about combat from only the point of view of an experience resulting in PTSD may be to ignore other less spoken about aspects of this experience that could be used to facilitate healing and an ability and right for all Veterans to live a healthy productive life.

What about the intensity of combat, the living on the edge in the presence of others and intimate reliance on others. It’s that feeling of being intensely alive, the “high” of the hunt, the power of the warrior within, knowing where you are, being located in community, camaraderie - it’s about a level of “meaning” and experience that can leave one yearning for a lifetime afterwards in what can be experienced as the humdrum routine of civilian life and the daily routine and predictable pattern of work. So many Veterans I have spoken to yearn for the time when they truly felt like Men, when the deeply close and intimate connectedness with fellow soldiers bonded through the blood rite of combat, could almost transcend the intimacy of marital relationships. In a deep way, it’s not just about trauma and stress but also about loss and grief and the difficulty of finding meaning in a different, less intense world. To heal is to therefore also respectfully acknowledge this loss and grief at so many levels. It’s about understanding that the seductive intensity of combat with its sounds and smells does not need to leave one feeling lost, bereft and dislocated. It about understands that the memory of the thrill of the hunt, the contact, the long days of hyper alert patrolling does not mean that they are maladjusted. It’s about acceptance of these feelings without guilt. It’s about recreating new and constructive challenges in civilian life. These can be challenges such as maintaining personal fitness and well being, taking up a sport and setting goals that can extend one and bring one back into the presence of other men-running a marathon, walking Oxfam, swimming etc. The “edge”, the feeling of being authentically alive, of being challenged and being with other men is not the sole right of war.

Combat training is about being taught how to kill; it’s about being “rewired” for life in a way which is counter to being human in an institution which sanctions the need for aggression and the ability to take life. Veterans need to make their peace with this rewiring, with the deep and often shameful sense that 40 years later as a husband and father there is still the sense of that part of oneself that is capable of the unspeakable. Healing is not about burying or forgetting this. It’s about allowing Veterans to acknowledge, own and respect this part of them.
Many of the lessons of war and combat can be used by Veterans to move forward in their civilian lives. It’s about helping Veterans to draw on their strengths and the lessons of soldiering. Life and relationships are very much like a patrol. You need to think about where you are going and what you will need. You need to plan and ensure you work as a team. You need to be able to listen and when lost or uncertain look at a map. You need to pace yourself and at times when under significant levels of stress draw on reserves and tap into supplies of resilience. You need to trust and care for those around you. You need to exercise judgment. The qualities of planning, listening, preparation, consultation, care, respect, resilience, effort and trust are the foundations of being human. There is a flow between the world of the soldier and the world of the civilian that can be tapped into in the counseling situation that can be meaningful and deeply transforming to Veterans.

War need not just be an experience relegated to the psychiatric or counseling encounter. It need not be just traumatically stressful. Yes it can be all of these but the soldier never dies - Anzac and the March will live on as soldiers continue to gather, grieve, and walk the road of memory while for a brief moment in time recapture a moment they hold at the deepest part of themselves. It’s about embracing the soldier and re-finding the warrior in the present and drawing on the positive aspects from the past, whom they were and whom they still are. It’s about remembering that as Veterans they can still stand tall and be good men, good husbands and good fathers. It’s about acknowledging grief, guilt, loss and shame and learning to stand tall. Combat need not just be the end of a good life but the beginning of an even better life firmly grounded in the wisdom, learning and experience found in that place called War.

Barry Zworenstein, November 2012
Military wives strip down to support spouses in ‘Battling Bare’ campaign

Striking topless pictures serve to call attention to service members struggling with post-traumatic stress and other invisible injuries of war. ‘Battling Bare’ founder Ashley Wise started the movement after a frustrating ordeal of trying to get her husband help.

A group of military wives are taking a head-turning approach to help combat a crisis. They are going bare to raise awareness about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and the need for treatment.

It all started with just one picture and a Facebook post, and within months the movement included hundreds of women from around the world taking off their tops to “Battle Bare. “This is a pledge that you’re making for your spouse that, in my opinion, is just as important as marriage vows,” Wise said.

Wise said she came up with the pledge to battle bare out of desperation, which she said grew as she tried to get help for her husband, who suffered from PTSD at Fort Campbell.

"I felt like streaking the general's lawn, because then maybe a naked woman would get attention, and they wouldn't sweep me underneath the rug," Wise said. "I decided to, instead, do a photo campaign, and it's what I call a 'God moment' - pledge, picture. Ten minutes later, it was on Facebook." In Wise's photo, she appears with her husband's hat and gun, but Wise said her husband was not her only inspiration.

"These are my husband's dog tags. They were found in his car when they retrieved his car and brought back to me after they found my husband's body," said Alicia McCoy. Alicia McCoy's husband, Sgt. Brandon McCoy died of suicide in March. She said her husband sought help for PTSD, but it wasn't enough. "Our soldiers have a lot to say. They have a lot bottled up inside of them, and no one is listening. I feel like they are afraid to be able to say what they need to say, because it will hurt their record," Alicia McCoy said.

That is a silence Wise and the other women hope to slowly break with Battling Bare's mission - one picture, pledge and soldier at a time. Wise said Battling Bare works to refer service members to outlets for care.

She added that in the coming months the group will become a fully pledged nonprofit origination.
The Facebook page

Hello and welcome to our page!
As the founder of Battling BARE, Inc., I'd like to personally say thank you for taking time out of your day to check out our organization and campaign. There are many sites out there to support our Service Members—so the fact that you found us, whether on purpose or simply stumbling along on the Internet, means a lot to us. So honestly, thank you.

Battling BARE, Inc. was born out of loneliness, frustration, hurt, anger and despair...lots of negative things, but being a firm believer in taking negative energy and focusing it on something positive, BB was created. At the point in which the idea for our first BB pic came, soldier suicide was a weekly occurrence—a friend’s husband had actually just ended his own life a few weeks before, my husband had hit a wall after hearing about his former platoon mate snapping in Afghanistan (I am sure you know the story), a few weeks later he lost one of his own soldiers from overdose. On top of everything else, my family was facing 72 hours of no contact with my husband due to Domestic Assault charges that occurred after heading to the Army's Family Advocacy Program for help. Now, I want to be perfectly clear in that Family Advocacy has helped many a family. In my instance, however, words and intent were twisted.

Led to share my story with fellow wives here on Fort Campbell, I soon learned that my story wasn’t unique. In fact, many wives were living in a state of despair—not knowing what else to do to help their husbands who were tormented by the memories of combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. These wives didn’t want to quit on their marriages or walk away from the man that they had pledged to love and stand beside until death parted them.

You see the thought of giving up on my marriage and walking away had plagued my mind over and over. I was accused of fighting a losing battle, being co-dependent—or just plain crazy for staying with a man that didn’t like going into public places, didn’t communicate, was angry much of the time and a total jerk to be around. I am a Christian—though Battling BARE, Inc. isn’t about religion or “converting” people, I share this because it is just part of my story—so, I prayed and felt that the answer was this:

- #1 I lacked the faith to believe in miracles
- #2 I lacked the patience to wait for a miracle

Both options were unacceptable to me because I firmly believe that when your eyes are opened to recognize a problem/issue, you inherently are taking responsibility to at least try to fix the issue. So, I stayed—took time physically away from my husband, but remained married...knowing that I just couldn’t give up on him...on us...on our love. The man I fell in love with was somewhere inside the protective shell of anger and isolation. I became obsessed on finding that man again.

After learning that my story was repeated over and over and over again within the military community, the drive to do something became so strong, I literally felt on fire. Tempted to “streak” the 101st Airborne Division’s command building in the hope of gaining the attention of the Commanding General so that SOMEONE would hear, I instead created the picture and our beautiful pledge.

We are here for those that love a soldier with PTSD. We want them to know that they are NOT ALONE, there is support out there from people who GET IT and feel the same way.
We’ll keep at it and hope that you will join us, bravely Battling BARE.

Until Every Soldier is WHOLE,

Ash Wise, Founder & President, Battling BARE, Inc.
Military Mascots

A number of RLI traditions stem from our British heritage.

As we all know, pets were commonplace in each of the commandos and many can attest to the clandestine operations to keep such animals in hiding.

I am sure for those who ever did duty in Kariba will recall the drunken warthog (whose name escapes me!), I Commando’s. 1 troop mascot/pet; Percy the puff-adder, the eagles of various officers and NCO's who thought the sport of falconry was a metaphor for RLI stealth operations etc.

We of course had our cheetah’s, probably the most exotic of military mascots.

I hope you find the following, after the PTSD articles; light and refreshing.

Mascots in time

Regiments of the British Army have long been prone to adopt members of the animal world as their mascot: dogs, goats and ponies are just a few that have graced ceremonial parades. When the custom of having Regimental mascots first started is not clear. The earliest record is that of a goat belonging to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the 1775 American War of Independence. Some mascots in the British Army are indicative of the recruiting area of a regiment, such as the Derbyshire Ram, Staffordshire bull terrier, Irish Wolfhounds and Welsh Goats.

British Army mascots are classified as either regimental pets or regimental mascots. The former are unofficial mascots since the Army does not recognize them, while the latter are official mascots, having been recognized by the Army. Official British Army mascots are entitled to the services of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, as well as quartering and food at public expense. It costs the Army the equivalent of $55,000 a year for the upkeep of official mascots. There are also mascots whose upkeep is borne by the regiment or unit itself. They are unofficial mascots, which are properly referred to as regimental pets.

The Army is keen in preserving the distinction between pets kept by the soldiers and official mascots of the regiments. The case for official mascot recognition is presented before the Army Honours and Distinction Committee. By getting an official status, the mascot will receive a regimental number, assume a proper rank, with prospects of promotion and get its fare share of Army rations. There are three rules set down in 1953 that need to be hurdled to get official mascot status. First, the regiment must comply with the welfare guidelines issued by the Army Veterinary Corps to ensure that the mascot is properly fed and housed. Second, the regiment's Commanding Officer must give approval before the case goes to the Army Honours and Distinctions Committee. Third, the Committee will consider whether the mascot is "appropriate", can take an active part in army life, including ceremonial occasions, and have a symbolic and historic connection with the regiment.

A total of sixteen ceremonial pets are kept by ten Army regiments, but only nine are recognized as official regimental mascots by the Army. It is a privilege jealously guarded by those who have it. So far, the animals that have made the grade of official regimental mascot are the horse, pony, wolfhound, goat, ram and antelope.
The Chinese legacy

The Mascot of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment dates back to 1871 when the first one was brought back from China. It is an Indian Black Buck antelope called Bobby, escorted by two drummers. They wear dress tunics and blue field service caps. Their tunics are scarlet with blue collars and blue jam-pot cuffs.

Behind Bobby are the men of the Colour party, two officers and a Colour sergeant. The sergeant-drummer is behind them, wearing a special pattern tunic with shoulder wings like the drummers' but with gold lace instead of white, and gold lace along the top of the collar. The officers' helmets have pointed peaks with a gilt edge while the other ranks have rounded peaks edged in black.

Private Wojtek

The name is still common in Poland today and means "he who enjoys war" or "smiling warrior".[1]

In 1942, a local boy found a bear cub near Hamadan, Iran whose mother had been shot. He sold it to the soldiers of the Polish Army stationed nearby for a couple of canned meat tins. As the bear was less than a year old, he initially had problems swallowing and was fed with condensed milk from an emptied vodka bottle. The bear was fed with fruits, marmalade, honey and syrup, and was often rewarded with beer, which became his favourite drink. He also enjoyed smoking and eating cigarettes. He enjoyed wrestling and was taught to salute when greeted. The bear became quite an attraction for soldiers and civilians alike, and soon became an unofficial mascot of all units stationed nearby. With the company he moved to Iraq and then through Syria, Palestine and Egypt.[4]

To get him on a British transport ship when the unit sailed from Egypt to fight with the British 8th Army in the Italian campaign, he was officially drafted into the Polish Army as a private and was listed among the soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company of the Polish II Corps. Henryk Zacharewicz and Dymitr Szawlugo were assigned as his caretakers.

As one of the officially enlisted "soldiers" of the company, he lived with the other men in their tents or in a special wooden crate, which was transported by truck. According to numerous accounts, during the Battle of Monte Cassino, Wojtek helped his friends by transporting ammunition – never dropping a single crate. In recognition of the bear's popularity, the HQ approved an effigy of a bear holding an artillery shell as the official emblem of the 22nd Company (by then renamed to 22nd Transport Company)
The RLI has of course the cheetah; certainly a metaphor for speed, agility, tenaciousness, bravery and aggression.

Here are a few extracts from Geoffrey Bond’s Book ‘The Incredibles’ (1977)

“The first regimental mascot, sitting majestically in front of the adjutant of Number One Training Unit; Captain J. L. Thompson, in Bulawayo before the regiment moved to Salisbury

“On formation of the regiment the then General Officer Commanding Major General R. E. B. Long CBE, arranged in conjunction with Lt. Col. Salt, for the battalion to be presented with a Cheetah as a regimental mascot.

The animal had been rescued, as a cub, from locals in South West Africa, in 1958. He was brought to Salisbury by his first owner and subsequently purchased by Army Headquarters for some £200, and donated to the unit.

His first handler was ‘big’ Bob Bairstow… Private Cheetah was always unpredictable. On his bad days, he would fly at the hospital staff, chase civilians, he fought with a bull terrier, and lashed out at visiting VIPs.

He refused on principle to do what was expected of him, and chased people on the slightest provocation.

(It seems as if he would have made an ideal ‘trooper’!!!)

Private Cheetah was promoted Lance Corporal on 10 June 1961

The following mascots served the regiment:

- L/Cpl Cheetah (1962)
- Pvt Nero (1962)
- Tpr Caesar (1964)
- Tpr Cleopatra (1964)
- Tpr Saint (1975)

With Trooper Saint, only a cub, (and yet to be Christened), an imposter, was loaned to the regiment for the 1975 birthday celebrations.
As the years go by we say farewell to more friends; may those who passed this year rest in peace

Boet Swart    Battalion 2ic; and subsequently 2ic of Selous Scouts (November 2012)
Ed Fouche BCR 2 Commando; and subsequently served with RAR
Joe Wiper      1 Commando
Howie Pascoe   3 Commando
Jon Cole       OC 2 Commando
Darryl Pfaff   3 Commando
Paddy Berry    3 Commando
Roy Capener    MT Troop
Thea Schoeman  Mother of the late Douglas and Kevin Cookson (Thea was a member of the Association) and well known to many in the Battalion
On the 11th November 2012, the UK Branch organized a Remembrance Day parade in Bedford.

A wonderful occasion and attended by some 70 RLI RA members.

These photographs are taken from the march itself and the dinner/dance organized by Martyn Hudson.
Reunification
After a number of years where there was a damaging internal rift within the membership, we were pleased to resolve many issues and re-establish a unified Australia/NZ branch.
 Whilst we have a way to go, we have requested and are slowly reestablishing a combined membership and look forward to a unified and substantial presence of all ex RLI soldiers at our various events.
We welcome Vince Zoric, Dawn and Glyn Losper and Ian Cameron Mackintosh, who has also accepted a position on our committee as a full voting member, and who is in charge of the Western Australian Members group.

ANZAC day & other events 2013/4 :
The annual ANZAC day celebrations and march this year was held in Brisbane. A photographic record of the event is to be found at the end of this report.
It was great to see old friends again; the event and post event celebrations (a day outing at Jimmy Swan’s ‘Flame Lily’ resort, where we ‘shot’ each other in a game of laser tag; was well attended and enjoyed by all.

ANZAC Day 2014
Such was the success of this year’s event , the 2014 celebration will again take place in Brisbane.
The Stamford Plaza, on the corner of Edward and Margaret Street, , is still our preferred Hotel, and is perfectly positioned for our requirements. Not only is it close to the start of our march, it is minutes from the park we had our own additional dawn service at and will followed by Bori rolls and coffee done by Simone Johnson and family. It is also close to the Customs pub where we traditionally have a few jars after the march.
PLAN: 24th April 2014. For those of you who can take time off and would like to come out to the Caboolture airport, Jimmy and Bill and possibly 2 others will do a Commando freefell and prior we will tip our heads for our fallen and this footage will be part of the presentation in the evening. If we know of numbers we can have a sausage sizzle and a beer or 2 afterwards.
The plan is to meet at the front of the Stamford Plaza Hotel at 1700 hrs on the 24th April 2014 in our normal No 2 dinner attire and board the bus or busses, depending on our numbers and have our dinner at the fantastic up market Summit Restaurant, Mt Coot-our.
We will continue with our guest speaker talk, and as per previous year’s will keep the identify somewhat close to chests, until the evening itself.
We will ask the restaurant to allow us to kick off with the formalities early so we can then get into the dinner by 19.30 and even a little chassis shaking afterwards!!
25th April: The normal Dawn Parade will start by us meeting at the Stamford Plaza at 0400 in our full No1 dress and heading there together and then back to the park by our hotel for our own Service, followed by coffee and Bori rolls. We then head back to our rooms or the foyer and relax and meet again at 09.45 for pics and then we head for the march in full No 1 dress and meet with the Rhodesians who we march behind and any of our guys who will march in our group.
If you are keen, just let us know if you can make the event (rich.johnson@bigpond.com)

Donations
Please let it be known that we do not intend to have any membership fees for the branch. However we do need funds for Guest Speakers, deposits and so forth and ask all members that should you be in a position to make donations as and when possible, please just email Richard and he will arrange an appropriate account. rich.johnson@bigpond.com. Please note that all donations will remain anonymous.
Around the world: Australia / New Zealand
The Shamwari Trust

An introduction
Towards the latter part of 2011 a meeting was held at the Johannesburg Country Club consisting of the Chairmen and representatives from the RLI, SAS, BSAP and the Rhodesian Air Force. It was established that there was an urgent need to create a welfare organization to meet the growing demands for assistance from ex-servicemen of the Rhodesian Armed Forces. The Combined Forces Welfare Trust was established, which later became known as The Shamwari Trust following an offer from the Flame Lily Foundation of a defunct trust in Durban.

The Shamwari Trust is now officially established with Trustees from each Service Association as members.

TRUSTEES

- Ian Bate (RLI) – Chairman*
- Andy Harris (Rhodesia Regiment)
- Charles Campbell (Selous Scouts)
- Greg Kietzmann (SAS) In charge of Trust finances.
- John Pirrett (BSAP)
- Steve Prophet (Rhodesian Air Force)
- Terry Leaver (RAR)
* Chairmanship rotates amongst Trustees annually.

Volunteers:

- Alan Butcher (RLIRA & 2RR) a retired accountant – Treasurer for The Shamwari Trust
- Cheryl Grover (Rhodesian Air Force & Combined Operations) - Manager of The Servicemen
- Ron Wheeldon (RhInf) Lawyer
- Rob Marsh Accountant (RLI) - Treasurer of RLIRA
- Tom Douglas (SAS/RLIRA) - General assistance

The Chairmen and in some cases the Presidents of the RLIRA, SAS, Selous Scouts and the Rhodesian Air Force regularly attend meetings and their input is invaluable.
We would welcome any volunteers and are specifically in need of expert fund raisers.

PATRON

We are delighted to announce that Air Marshall Mick McLaren had kindly consented to be the Patron of Shamwari Trust. Not only was the Air Marshall a brilliant commander of the Rhodesian Air Force, he was also Deputy Commander of Combined Operations under Lt Gen Peter Walls who has sadly passed away.

REGIONAL COMMITTEES

At date of writing we have established Regional Fundraising Committees in Cape Town and Durban. Gauteng is currently being formed. The function of these committees is to organize fundraising projects for The Shamwari Trust. We encourage other regions to follow suit and we look forward to have representatives in East London, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, Polokwane, and other districts.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of The Shamwari Trust is to provide support for ex-servicemen of the Zimbabwe/Rhodesia Armed Forces encompassing all former units under command of the Zimbabwe/Rhodesia Army, The Zimbabwe/Rhodesian Air Force and the British South Africa Police. This includes all Regular and Territorial servicemen who served between 1st January 1964 and 30th October 1980 and are resident in South Africa. Requests from ex-servicemen who are resident in other countries may be considered on compassionate grounds. This support shall include but is not limited to:-

- Assistance in the provision of accommodation.
- Assistance in arranging medical treatment.
- Monetary grants to individuals /families in need.
  Generally, provision of direct payments to individuals is discouraged and payment will preferably be made to person/s demanding payment e.g. doctors, hospitals etc. No consideration can be given to payment of arrears in bond payments or similar personal loans. Where applicable food parcels can be arranged.
- Assistance to aged and disabled ex-servicemen, which can be provided through the MOTHS and SA Legion.
- Provision of a counseling service for ex-servicemen in need of spiritual /psychological support and guidance. It is intended to establish a network for ex-servicemen with PTSD.
- Assistance in obtaining employment through The Servicemen, a non-profit employment agency established to specifically cater for unemployed ex-servicemen. The Servicemen is an integral part of the Shamwari Trust.
  - To raise funds to support future anticipated outlay on welfare.
  - To establish the infrastructure for vetting and approving applications for assistance.
  - To develop a web site for individuals and associations to contact The Shamwari Trust for requests and donations.

FUND RAISING

From the outset it was agreed that where possible each Service Association would provide seed money to assist with establishing The Shamwari Trust. Thereafter, it would be up to The Shamwari Trust to organise its own fundraising activities. In addition, some of the Service Associations have indicated that they will continue to support
Associations that have given their seed money. To those who have not, we ask that they please consider supporting this worthwhile cause which will assist their members.

Various fundraising schemes are in the planning stage and we ask that the Service Associations give them maximum support as and when they happen.

**THE SERVICEMEN**

We pay special tribute to Steve Prophet (Rhodesian Air Force) and his vision in establishing The Servicemen as an employment agency. To date, and these are early days, Cheryl Grover, their very capable Manager, have placed in excess of 20 ex-servicemen in jobs including expatriate positions internationally. An indication of the economy and the effects and ravages of Black Economic Empowerment practices has meant that The Servicemen are looking for positions for some 86 ex -servicemen and women. To assist in securing suitable employment opportunities, the Associations are requested to advise all their members of the services offered by The Servicemen and request them to contact Cheryl Grover (079 6968193, cheryl@theservicemen.co.za) should they be looking for staff. We see this function being vital to the overall concept of The Shamwari Trust and congratulate Steve and his team for getting it to work.

Whilst we know that The Servicemen are doing an excellent job, it does not come without a cost. Salaries have to be met and overheads covered. We appeal to all Rhodesian businessmen to donate to The Servicemen and this can be done by making either a once-off donation or alternatively a monthly donation for a fixed period. All donations are tax deductible. More detail on what The Servicemen does can be found on their web site at www.theservicemen.co.za.

Associations are asked to let us know who in their membership owns their own companies so that direct approaches can be made.

**DONATIONS**

Most donations we receive are from generous Rhodesians and our appeal is to everyone who is able to donate to send to (Bank Account?) Donations can be made annually or on a monthly debit order basis and as noted above, will become tax deductible.

**WEB SITE**

For more detail on the Shamwari Trust you will find us on the web at [www.shamwaritrust.co.za](http://www.shamwaritrust.co.za)

(Under Construction)

We respectfully request all Associations to circulate this “Introductory to The Shamwari Trust” to their membership as we call on all Rhodesians to help us to help our own.

Yours in service

Lt Col Ian Bate MLM
Dear readers / members,

It has been a little while since an update was send to you on the developments in the Combined Forces Trust project. The Trust is now formally called the Shamwari Trust and has the South African registered Trust number 1186/2002/PMB

The overall scope of the Trust has had to accommodate most regiments/arms and it is pleasing to see the ex TA members that have now started the process under Andy Harris, of establishing the Rhodesia Regiment Veterans Association (Worldwide) and we wish them the very best of luck.

Of course the greatest challenge the Trust faces is that of raising funds. To this end a number of initiatives are under development and the best of the short term projects is that of the sale of memorabilia on the Bid or Buy auction site as well as the component units in the Trust also using there own databases / websites to encourage members to dig out their stashed kit and katunda and donate this to the Trust to auction off. I met with Martyn Hudson on his recent Africa Safari and Martyn is to look into surplus memorabilia at the Museum and donate such to the Shamwari Trust to help raise funds. The Trust has a few items already including donated wall hangings from Leon Jacobs, a statuette from John Redfern of the Flame Lily Foundation and a whole box of kit including miniature medals from Simon Carpenter, but needs a lot more to raise meaningful funds for the welfare of all ex-Rhodesian servicemen. Of course there have been some very generous brothers in arms who made substantial cash donations. If like me you have hung onto kit for far too long there is no better time than now to hand it over for a very worthwhile and honorable cause.

The sale of the RLI book, Africa’s Commandos has slowed down a bit but the Association has broken even on the R 350 000.00 cost of production and as pledged by us some time ago the surplus income from sales will be earmarked by the Africa Committee to be sent on to the Trust from the RLI.

We appeal to all our members and friends to donate what militaria they can to Shamwari but please add a note of permission to the Trust for public sale of your articles.

Billy Wiggill

CEO
Deville wood

It is with pride that we received news of the inclusion of the RLI, in the Delville Wood commemoration ceremonies in South Africa and hopefully (in France) in years to come.

Most people, particularly those with South African connections will know of the battle and its significance to that country. The commemoration, of course represents not only the many lives lost in France on that fateful day, but also the lives and sacrifices of all those who fought and suffered as a consequence of the 1914-18 war.

It is significant also for Rhodesians; our predecessors, unable to form their own battalion, fought not only at Delville Wood but also in the initial offensive:

- The Southern Rhodesian platoon of the Kings Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC), charged the German lines early in the morning on the 1st July. It was catastrophic, of the 90 Rhodesians, present at roll call on the evening of 30 June only 10 were alive and unwounded afterwards

- The Rhodesian contingent of the South African Infantry brigade; The 3rd South African Infantry (Transvaal and Rhodesian) Regiment commanded by Lt Col E.F. Thackeray, which was deployed into Delville wood itself on the 15th July...

In 1916 the wood known as Bois d'Elville, near Longueval (9 miles from Albert), (and christened 'Devil's Wood' by allied troops) was a major German defensive feature. The South African Brigade, attached to the 9th Scottish Division, was given the task of capturing the wood in July 1916.

On 15 July at dawn the South African regiment went in following a heavy artillery battle: they managed to clear the southern edge of German forces but the remainder of the wood was still in German hands. Hand to hand fighting ensued until the South African Brigade was relieved on the night of 19 July, having lost 766 dead among the four battalions alone.

Throughout poor weather (it rained often) and enemy artillery fire which reached a crescendo of 400 shells a minute, the surrounding landscape was transformed into a mess of broken, stumpy tree roots and massive shell holes. Mud and rainwater covered bodies of Allied and German forces alike - many bodies remain in the wood today (which is now in private hands). The Delville Wood cemetery to be found opposite the memorial contains 5,493 graves; almost two-third of these are unknown.

The actual statistics for the entire offensive are somewhat vague, but it is recorded that, of the 3150 South African and Rhodesian soldiers involved, 2450 never came home. Many lie in unmarked and unknown graves.