

# SITREP LVI



December 2020

## DIARY OF EVENTS: PROPOSED DATES FOR 2021

### AUSTRALIA

Gold Coast: Sunday Curry Lunch, Punjab Curry Club, Jindalee TBA

Brisbane: Sunday Curry Lunch, Punjab Curry Club, Jindalee TBA

Contact: Alastair Napier Bax. Tel: 07-3372 7278 <al\_bax@bigpond.com>

EA Schools: Picnic, Lane Cove River National Park, Sydney TBA

Contact: TBA

Perth: Bayswater Hotel – KRA and EA Schools curry lunch 23/02/2021

Contacts: KRA – Aylwin Halligan-Jolly kisigulu@hotmail.com

DOY Richard Tredget <richpam.1@bigpond.com>

KHS Patricia Dunn <dun1822@gmail.com>

### ENGLAND

The KenReg Rafikis 2020 Curry Lunch at The Victory Services Club, TBA

63-79 Seymour St, London, W2 2HF.

Contact: John Harman <J\_Harman@msn.com> Tel: (0044) 1635 551182.

Mob: 078-032 81357. 26 Grove Rd, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DT.

### KENYA

Remembrance Sunday and Curry Lunch. Venue TBA 14/11/2021

Contact: Dennis Leete <dleete2@gmail.com>

### NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Soljans Winery & Restaurant, Kumeu, Auckland TBA

Contact: Arthur Schofoeld <crisnrthr@gmail.com>

### SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town: ‘Sweetwell’ restaurant, Stellenbosch off R44 to Somerset West TBA

Contact: Geoff Trollope. Tel: 021-855 2734 <geoffandjoy@mweb.co.za>

Johannesburg: Sunday Curry lunch – Venue TBA TBA

Contact: Keith Elliot. Tel: 011-802 6054 <kje@telkomsa.net>

KwaZulu-Natal: Sunday Carveries: Fern Hill Hotel, nr Midmar Dam TBA

Contact: Jenny/Bruce Rooken-Smith. <rookenjb@mweb.co.za>; or

Ray/Sally Letcher. <sallyletcher@gmail.com>

Kenya Regiment Website <www.Kenyaregiment.org> administered by Graeme Morrison

SITREP Editor: Bruce Rooken-Smith, P.O. Box 1329, Howick, 3290, RSA. My thanks to John Davis for proof-reading at very short notice, and from afar!

Front cover: **Ngong Hills** (By kind permission Mike Nicholson). Artist unknown – this picture first appeared in Old Africa Issue 88.

Back cover: **Mudanda, the Elephant Queen**. Photo by Will Burrard-Lucas who, through Richard Moller, kindly allowed me to use it in this edition of SITREP. Richard’s team under the Tsavo Trust’s Big Tusker Project, followed Mudanda for some five years before her death in 2017.

The views expressed in SITREP LVI are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, nor those of the Association – E&OE

## GARAMBA NATIONAL PARK



Frozen in a moment of 1948, a hunting team of a different sort gathers before the camera. Its members staffed the Elephant Domestication Station that existed for well over 100 years in the Belgian Congo. For most of that time the headquarters were in Garamba National Park in the northeast of the country. The team's duty was to catch wild African elephants and train them to work in the forests and on farms, like their domesticated 'cousins' in Asia. Included in the group were the director of the station (probably Major J. Haezaert), his assistant, a field management team comprising a chief officer, a quartermaster, three trumpeters, two liaison officers and three grooms, and local men who acted as mahouts, controlling the platoon of trained elephants. At one point, more than 80 elephants were being employed in road maintenance and to plough fields.

The project was the brainchild of King Leopold of Belgium, who ran the Belgian Congo in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was by the ruling country's royal decree that Garamba was established as a national park in 1938. Some 40 years later, the park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but found itself on the World Heritage in Danger list in 1996 due to the threat to the remaining northern white rhinos, which are now probably extinct in the wild.

[Ed: *Following extract from Dennis Leete's article about his Safari to Garamba in May 1996 - see mini-SITREP XXXVIII pp 48-58.*]

‘There was a legend that we heard as children many years ago, of a school for elephants in the Belgian Congo, where African elephants were trained to work in agricultural and forestry projects. As time passed, and Zaire came into existence, followed by horror and bloodshed, the story slipped into history and was forgotten.

Fifty years on, in 1994, Alan Root [KR4992] picked up the traces and made a TV documentary for BBC, which showed that a few survivors of that project still live today in the Garamba National Park in North Eastern Zaire, on the borders with Southern Sudan near the Central African Republic.

Imre Loeffler, our local surgeon, ornithologist, aviator, and raconteur whose curiosity rivals the famous cat, and leads him into amazing situations - with risks of a similar fate - picked up the story and through his network of contacts, planned an expedition to Garamba, to which Jane and I were privileged to be invited, amongst a party of ten others.....’



Printed by Pmb Drawing, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

## FOREWORD

The virus has certainly affected all of us and forced many to reassess our daily routine. One of my moans is the continued lack of postal services in South Africa, where, rather than expanding their distribution points they are reducing them, the latest casualty being Hilton post office with residents being told to collect their mail from Pietermaritzburg, a 20km round trip; likewise, Merrivale residents have to travel 10km to collect their mail from Howick post office which with long queues of social grant beneficiaries, is the pits!

Before SITREP LV was printed I visited the post master of one of the many post offices dotted around Pietermaritzburg and was advised that he was quite happy to accept mail, but he would have to print dated-stickers for each envelope because there were no stamps, furthermore he admitted rather sheepishly that delivery was not guaranteed!

Luckily, on one of my trips to the bank in Hilton I came across a Mioffice outlet where the manager mentioned that they used DHL and Fedex, with bulk deliveries to Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town guaranteed within one to three days at R99.00 per parcel.



So, after Peter Scott [KR6769] [TOP LEFT] very kindly offered to deliver SITREP in the Howick area, I despatched a round-robin to all members asking for volunteers to act as distribution points (DP) in the major cities. John [KR6083] and Alena Crampton and Alena's son Dennis [TOP RIGHT] offered to distribute in Durban, and very kindly paid for the courier to collect from our home.

Diana van Rensburg (w/o the late Boet KR3586 & KP) and daughter Annette [LEFT] offered to sort out Johannesburg and surrounds, assisted by Dave and Wynne Critchell (née Venville); James [KR4848] & Val Daniel, John Whittall [KR6129] and John Bind [KR6875]. My brother Rob [KR7427] agreed to act as the Cape Town DP. Janssen Davies [RIGHT] who was locked-down in White



River, took on Mpumalanga (formerly Eastern Transvaal) which necessitated a good deal of mileage and cell time because I only had members' post office box numbers, no street addresses and telephone numbers for non-existent landlines on the data base. [Ed: Janssen was born in Kenya in 1949, attended the Hill School before moving to South Africa in

*the mid-60s where he was a founder member of Equity Life in 1969. He retired after a number of years as MD of Sage Life. Amongst other commitments he is Chairman of National Executive Committee South African National Parks Honorary Rangers.]*



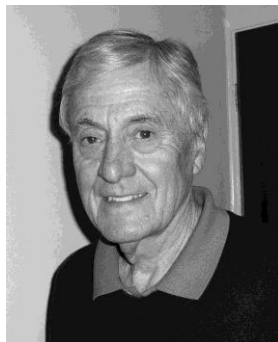
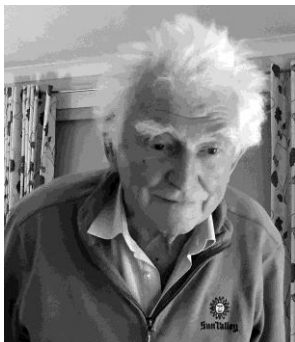
Terry Tory [KR6339] and Di Bowser (w/o the late Gordie Crow KR6033) collected and delivered to members on KZ-N's north coast, and June Lester (w/o the late Dave KR4131) and daughter Jenny, [LEFT] sorted out the south coast.

Colin Campbell-Gillies [KR3631] very kindly arranged delivery to members living in the Hillcrest/Kloof area.

Hopefully, the postal system will have improved by December and delivery of this SITREP can be guaranteed. If not, I will have again resorted to

establishing DPs which will have been finely tuned after our first exercise!

Below L/R: Eugene Armour [KR4446] during lock-down and John Davis [KR7457] who arranged printing and distribution in UK; Aylwin Halligan-Jolly [KR6194] and Richard Tredget [DoY CCF] who sorted out Western Australia [Ed: *Only twelve copies! Richard has undertaken to try and improve numbers. Unfortunately, currently hospitalised – we wish him a speedy recovery*].



Al Napier-Bax [KR4967], who whilst not well, arranged printing and distribution for members on the east coast of Australia, and Ken [CCF] & Marion Elliott did likewise in New Zealand.

Ted Downer [KR4253] <kenreg4253@iprimus.com.au> writes 14/11/2020: I must first apologise for not responding to your emails over the past months and this was due to laxity on my part, nothing else.

The numbers of personnel in my areas – New South Wales, Northern Territories, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria - have depleted sadly and the wide dispersion of those left makes life awfully difficult. My advancing years also impose in various aspects, not the least of that involving our trying to find retirement village accommodation which implies the diminution of space available for the KRA paraphernalia. In this respect I have started discarding some of the older elements, and, taking the buffalo by the horns, must suggest that I bring KRA(SEA) to a conclusion.

I am asking you first for your comments etc. before advising WA and Queensland of my intent, and your ideas for the disposal of the funds in the bank account. [Ed: *At the time of going to print no discussion/decision had taken place but I suggested that Ted donate the money to the British Army Benevolent Fund, as did KRA(UK) when it folded. As a result of this donation John Davis advised*

*that the ABF Committee had agreed that the families of Regimental members who are in need could approach the Fund for assistance. Unless someone 'steps-up', I'm assuming with my demise SITREP will cease to exist, in which case remaining funds will be donated to the ABF.]*

In browsing around doing nothing, I found the Long Rolls in a Kenya Regiment heading, and I assume that this was in the first instance that they appeared on the Internet, as opposed to the main which I assume followed. In the second paragraph there is a mention of the Regimental number KR6510 having been issued twice - to JD Sprague and Geoffrey Thomas Pollitt. In the mid-fifties there was in Nairobi a member of the Kenya Police – Geoff Pollitt - whom I knew and was a member of the Scottish Dancing group which danced regularly in the Kirk Hall on Monday nights. He married a lass by the name of Diane Relleen in Nairobi.....(?). Whereabouts currently unknown, but I believe in NZ. [Ed: *The former appears in the abbreviated records but with no personal details. The latter appears on the Long Rolls but no details can be found in the abbreviated records. Could this be a computer glitch when I alphabeticalised the numerical roll?*]

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### MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years contemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.*

[Laurence Binyon]

Since mini-SITREP LV was distributed in June/July 2020, we have been advised of the deaths of the following members. In ( ) the name of the member/source whence the information came:

Aniere, Edward [KR3982]. 24/08/2020. W Australia (Francis Keast KR7045)  
Bleazard, Stanley Richard [KR4242/5772]. 03/08/2020. W Australia (Ian Parker KR4602)  
Branson, John Jeremy [KR4524]. 22/11/2020. Johannesburg (John Elliot KR7069)  
Bridge, Eric Ivan [KR6727]. 19/11/2020. Johannesburg (Wynne Critchell – née Venville)  
Burn, Christopher William [KR4906]. 14/07/2020. Canada (Don Rooker-Smith KR4969)  
Cobb, Andrew Charles Richmond [KR6799]. 19/10/2020. Cape Town (Geoff Trollope KR 6987)  
Dewar, Sally (née Robinson) w/o late Doug [KR3537]. 31/10/2020. Scotland (son Mark)  
Dickinson, Gerald Noel [KR6214]. 20/07/2020. Johannesburg (widow Anne (née Darvall))  
Dunt, Vice Admiral Peter CB [DoY CCF]. 13/10/2020. UK (Hugh Stott KR6866)  
Gledhill, John Trevor [KR7350]. 21/06/2020. Western Australia (Dennis Leete KR4094)  
Herbert, Gordon [KR6177/5876]. 20.11.2020. Nanyuki (John Davis KR7457)  
Hughes, John Howell Lt Col (Rtd) JCD [KR6240]. 18/09/2020. London (step-son Roly Gordon)  
Maxwell, Paul Baylis [KR4782]. 02/04/2019. Perth, W Australia (Wynne Critchell)  
Mayes, George [KR4495]. 27/10/2020. Eastern Cape, RSA. (Wynne Critchell)  
Perkins, Anthony John Mackworth [KR7029]. 29/11/2020. Hampshire, UK (son Chris)  
Roach, Keith Arthur [KR6090]. 14/04/2020. KZN (June Lester, née Matthews, formerly Poupard)  
Ross-Munro, Andrew Douglas [KR7130]. 04/08/2020. Cape Town (Geoff Trollope)  
Szlapak, Charles. 04/12/2020. Holland (brother-in-law John Elliot)  
Steel, Richard James [KR7289]. 24/03/2020. Western Australia (nephew Derek)  
Swain, Victor Anthony Nanucci MC [KR4238]. 17/11/2020. Perth (s-i-l Marilyn Northmore, (née Hickman) w/o Johnnie [KR4028])  
Tanner-Tremaine, Colin [KR7127]. 11/07/2020. Johannesburg (Wynne Critchell)  
Wood, Brian Hingston [KR7285]. 30/06/2020. N Yorks, UK. (John Harman KR7227)

## CORRESPONDENCE

Gilly Stanley [KR46222] <gil@walridge.net.au> 18/10/2020 writes: Greetings from Perth, Western Australia, or is it 'Mooro' or 'Goomap'? [Ed: *Gilly was on the first course (No.: 6 - 22<sup>nd</sup> July to 17<sup>th</sup> December 1954) to train at KRTC, Lanet, the last six-month course during the Emergency, the rest being reduced to three months*]:

A few lines to thank you sincerely for SITREP LV which arrived in the mail this week, from Richard Tredget and Aylwin Halligan-Jolly; what a bumper issue.

Your efforts in collating so many fascinating stories from many of old Kenya friends - on a variety of topics - well, is plain mind-boggling, and I would wish to thank you sincerely for doing all that, so well.

Old cronies like Tony Archer [KR4024] go back to the POW in the 40's when we first met, but also when he visited me in my Police Post in Embu district in 1954 (Kianjokoma - built by myself and Dave Pretorius!). Strangely enough, Tony Archer (and Mike Letcher) again looked me up, this time in 1960, at my Police Station, 'Yaumati' in Kowloon while I was completing what turned out to be a 22 year stretch with the Hong Kong Police! As Ian Parker [KR4602] mentioned, Tony was a great, truly unassuming guy, an unsung hero who deserved better. Sad to see him called 'above'.

I loved the article on Beyer-Garratts. My uncle, Claude Lee drove #86 'Budama' for many moons. Being a Mombasa kid, I remember when the new EC 6 locos arrived in Kilindini docks from the UK, Ah, all the nostalgia - it is killing this old man...marvellous!

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[Ed: *I forwarded Gil's letter to Kevin Patience, author of 'Waking the Maroon Giant'. He responded: Will have a look; its number was 5710 BUDAMA, if not the actual engine, one of the class. Have only the one photo so far, lying on its side [BELOW], I think due to the Mau Mau loosening the rails?*]

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Gilly 11/11/2020: More greetings from a slightly damp but pleasant Perth where we're now moving towards summer. Thanks for comments from Kevin Patience. I never knew # 86 Garret 'Budama' had once landed on its side, thanks to the Mau Mau. I know my uncle Claude Lee, at one time the driver, would have retired back to sunny England by the time Mau Mau had begun.

Claude Lee was similar to my old man, "Stan" (EA) Stanley, who also retired back to the UK, but in 1962, after many years with the Uganda Railway/KUR & H. Father started life in Kenya on 7th July, 1925, when he stepped off a Royal Navy ship, HMS CAIRO which was then visiting



Mombasa. He made his way to Nairobi where he 'enlisted' in the railway! In my time as a school kid - Nakuru Primary School and Prince of Wales - we lived in Yala, Gilgil, Nakuru, Mombasa and Eldoret, thanks to father and the railway.

Incidentally, in 1939 father advised the Royal Navy that he was variously in Kenya and Uganda building railways, in case they were looking for him; I have a copy of his RN service record which shows the Navy replied, saying they were no longer interested in him and had so advised the Colonial Office!

In 1960, he finished up with an MBE, which I have, for his service to 'Queen and Country', so someone, somewhere, must have thought building railways deserved a mention? He wanted to return the MBE when the Beatles of all people were awarded MBEs by Wilson's government, but was later convinced that it wasn't the right thing to do. [Ed: *I understand the Beatles' awards were in recognition of the immense revenue they were generating for the UK taxman?*]

Bruce, I have rambled on, but at least you can smile a little? Oh, the story goes that father left HMS CAIRO with a fellow RN sailor named Balsom (or Balsam?). I was at Nakuru School and at the POW with one of the two older Balsam brothers - Eric Balsam - coincidence, perhaps; maybe not.

*Kwa heri*. Take care, and I wish all the very best for Christmas and the New Year to you and your family and all KRA members and their families.

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### ELGON CAVES

[Renshaw Mitford Barberton]

When we came up to the Trans Nzoia to settle on two farms (7 and 20) which my father had bought early in 1913, one of the first adventures we had was to visit two large caves in the foothills of Mount Elgon which my Dad had seen but not visited when he came up to spy-out the area before the Government sold any land in the District.

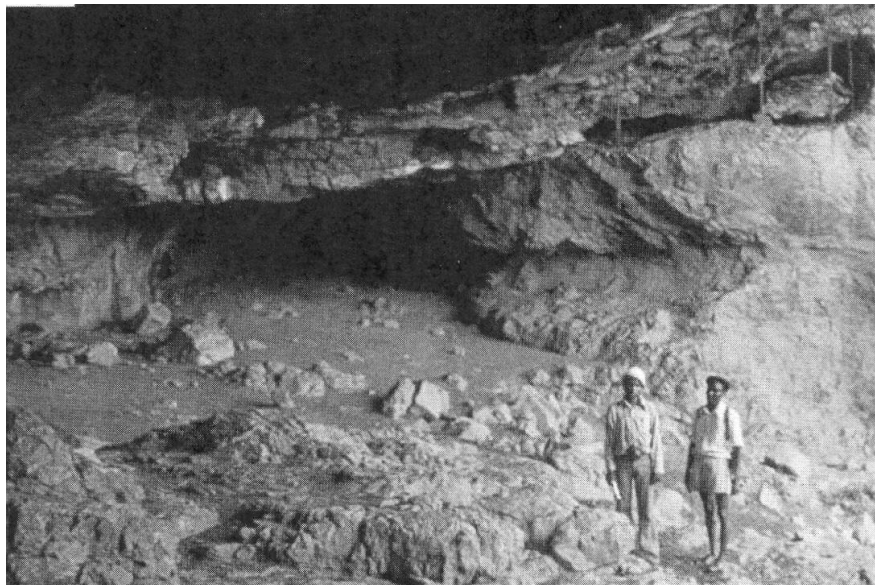
There were several Masai manyattas on the farm and other families were actually living in the caves with all their cattle, sheep and goats, safely stockaded off in the deeper and darker passages, some of which extended over 150 yards into the cliffs. Those living in the caves were certainly safe from marauding lions which could not molest their stock.

On examining these caves, we found that they appeared to be mostly man-made for wherever one looked there were thousands of axe or chisel marks in the walls, and the inhabitants told us that the rock contained *Chumbi* (Salt) and that it was always being dug and pounded up for their animals.

Exploring along the cliff face on farm 20 we discovered no less than 38 caves, of which about six were occupied by Masai and their cattle etc. In later years when the District became more settled and the Africans were required to pay hut-tax, the Government made all the cave dwelling people move out. They had to build out on the hills where conditions were more hygienic and where they could be counted for tax purposes.

Many of these caves were also occupied by millions of bats and we were able to procure many tons of guano, which we sold to coffee farmers as fertilizer.

All the lower foot-hills of Mount Elgon are pierced by caves, and over the years we explored over fifty miles of cliffs in our cave-hunting safaris, usually over weekends. In recent years, a 'Cavers Club' was formed; parties of ten or more members (some from Nairobi) would gather at a convenient farm, and from there survey an area and map all caves as they were discovered. One big volcanic cave on farm 7, which we explored thoroughly, had many passages which were inter-linked and it was quite possible to get lost for hours, which was far from pleasant. This cave we christened 'Hampton Court' and, to make exploration safer, we laid binder twine along the major passages; in all I should say we must have used four to five miles of twine. The cave, which must have been formed by volcanic action, has obviously been chipped at by man.



[LEFT: THE ENTRANCE TO ONE OF THE CAVES ON THE FARM]

All round Elgon from Endebess to Mbale on or about the 5,000 - 8,000 feet level, Tony Perkins and I have discovered several large caves hidden in the forests. Two of these are certainly visited by elephants to get at the mineral salt, gouging it off the roof and walls of the caverns with their tusks. These spots were

discovered when we found that we were walking on vast quantities of tightly packed elephant dung. Overhead, the roof of the cave is full of grooves formed by the great animal's tusks.

The highest cave on Elgon is at about 13,000 feet and this is entirely man-made. Here the workers have followed a thin stratum of soda or phosphates. There are many passages, all inter-connected and in no place is the roof more than three feet above the floor and in many spots harder material either juts up from the floor or hangs from the roof. Exploring this cave was most exhausting as we had to assume a squatting posture or crawl on hands



and knees; it was still being worked by the stock-owning natives who live in the forest on the Mountain. [ABOVE: CHILDREN IN A BOAT INSIDE ONE OF BARBERTON'S CAVE - Circa 1958]

Joseph Thomson, one of the first explorers to visit Mount Elgon in 1885, was convinced that the caves he saw (some of which were occupied by Kitosh and their stock) were man-made. This I think is correct in the case of many of the smaller caverns on a soda and phosphate level, but the huge caves which cover many miles of tunnels and acres in area, although extensively chipped, must have had a volcanic origin.

[Mitford-Barberton suggests that Joseph Thomson may have been the first European to locate these caves. Extracts from his book 'Through Masai Land', by Peggy Pickford, are quoted below.]

Joseph Thompson was the first white man to describe parts of the Trans Nzoia, which he visited in 1893. ['Through Masai Land' by Joseph Thomson, FRGS]. The object of his journey from the coast was to reach Lake Victoria, which he did. On his way back to join the companions he had left at Lake Baringo, he then decided to explore a little towards Mount Elgon. He writes: "On the 26th December we arrived at the confines of Masawa, and as they were at war with their neighbours of Elgon, we could get no guide to convey us thither. Next day we had to trust in our good luck and make a way for ourselves through the pathless forest which surrounds Elgon. At noon we reached the base of the mountain and camped. We saw no signs of inhabitants and were at a loss as to what to do".

He sent off men to reconnoitre. "They returned with the news that around the shoulder of the mountain, and on the opposite side of a small valley they saw smoke apparently issuing from a black hole in the face of a declivity, and that several such holes were to be seen all along a line of precipice."

Next morning, he set off to examine the caves and to try to find a guide. He compares Mount Elgon with Kenya and Kilimanjaro and comments on its obvious volcanic origin. "Pushing on we became aware of some natives perched on the top of an apparently inaccessible precipice". Hitting on a footpath he ascended and met some elders with whom he got on good terms by giving them presents, though they did not want him to proceed. However, he went on and "Gaining a ledge, I found a great yawning hole staring me in the face. Clambering over some rocks, I reached the mouth, which was strongly protected by a palisade of tree-trunks. Looking over this barrier, I witnessed an unexpected and very remarkable sight. There lay before me a huge pit, thirty feet deep, one hundred feet long, and about twenty broad, cut perpendicularly out of a volcanic agglomerate of great compactness". In this hole there were huts, children and cattle.

"On enquiry as to who made this curious excavation, I was told that it was 'God's work'. 'How', they asked, 'could we with our puny implements cut a hole like this?' and they went on to describe much larger holes which held whole villages and herds of cattle".

Thomson could not agree that they were natural, and he came to the conclusion that they had been excavated by some superior tribe many centuries earlier, possibly in search of precious stones, but he did not think of this until he had left the area, and always longed to return to test his theory. He noticed that the caves were all at a certain level.

The natives refused to give him a guide to Elgeyo, so he and his party had to push on alone, and they spent the night in a well-fortified but unoccupied cave. It was "a most capacious chamber over twelve feet high, though evidently there were several feet of dried dung. Occupying the nearer part of the chamber was a perfect representation of a Masai kraal - the basket like huts surrounding a circular central space, only, owing to the peculiar conditions, the huts had no roofs - the cave being perfectly dry. The excavation was of the most irregular character and rough rocks were left standing like pillars. ...I pushed further in ...after I had ventured a little short of one hundred yards without reaching an end, I was fain to proceed (left with no alternative) but to stop as I was now in utter darkness and did not know what I might fall into.



Close to the mouth of this cave was a picturesque cascade, and the approach to it was most difficult. Indeed, in native warfare, unless this stronghold could be taken by surprise, it could not be taken at all. Thoroughly puzzled with this astounding discovery, but too ill to continue my researches further, I had to return to camp".

[LEFT: A CASCADE OVER THE ENTRANCE TO ONE OF THE CAVES]

He wished to stay and explore, but..."We had a wilderness to traverse with no better guide than mere vague notions, assisted by a compass... The only inhabited part of the mighty Elgon is the South side, and here there is a very small and miserable remnant of a tribe, probably once more powerful. They were continually at war with the Wa-Kavirondo and are not unlikely to disappear from the face of the earth".

Other books in which Trans Nzoia is mentioned at some length are: 'My Kenya Acres' by Cherry Lander; 'A Knot of Roots' by the Earl of Portsmouth; 'Round the Next Corner' by Nicholas Hastings; 'Blue is the Sky' by G.D. Fleming;

'Last Chance in Africa' by Negley Farson; 'The Gate Hangs Well' by James Stapleton and 'The Lion and the Bicycle' by John Woods.

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STANLEY RICHARD BLEAZARD (KR4242/5772)

[2<sup>nd</sup> July 1930 – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020]

[Ian Parker KR4602]



Stan Bleazard checked out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September aged ninety years, two months and a day. Spry and mentally with it to the end, sciatica, a back op., home to recuperate, pneumonia, back to hospital, heart attack. As they say – *kila mtu ana siku zake* – his sands had run out and if his heart hadn't failed some crazy driver might have knocked him off, or a tree fallen on him; thus ended a full and interesting life.

As always, the problem is where to start, and on what to focus. With a keen sense of humour and the ridiculous, he would have appreciated his friend Iain Ross's comment on learning of Stan's death: "I first met Stan ..... he was at the top of a telephone pole." Bletzo would have laughed at the image of him being up the pole. In his time Stan had been variously an electrician, mountain climber, hunter, game warden, writer, professional guide, professional pilot, soldier (though not in that order), farmer and

ballroom dancer (though not professional!). Indeed, he and his wife Barbara danced regularly as their hobby and exercise and even when sciatica was riding him hard towards the end, he still kept dancing into the 90s.

To some Stan Bleazard was reserved and somewhat austere. Yet to those who knew him well, behind this façade the man was a warm friend who laughed easily. His boyhood was fractured by the break-up of his parents' marriage and being 'farmed out' to live at times with his maternal grandfather – Alf McIntyre – and others with Bill Howson – who in due course became his step-father. Both were saw-millers in Kenya's highland forests where wildlife abounded, and both allowed him to indulge his passion for hunting – often alone and with a single-shot .22. He doted on his father Jim Bleazard, but war service and a peripatetic career limited the time they spent together. His mother, Jennie, and Bill Howson gave him two half-brothers Ken and Les, and when Jim Bleazard remarried, he gained a half-sister and another half-brother, Gavin. Although he stayed in contact with these siblings throughout his life, differences in age and circumstances made him somewhat of a loner.

Bletzo, so called at the Prince of Wales school or by his early Kenya Regiment mates was not a swat. This was because he lacked interest rather than intellect. Leaving school he had not really prepared himself for any specific career and as the field of wildlife was then not easily entered, he drifted into being an electrician. In this role he joined the East African Posts & Telegraphs Authority and was posted to Uganda. It was fixing something at the top of one of their poles that Iain Ross, who was passing by, was introduced to him. Yet his spare time was spent hunting and exploring, in which time he twice climbed high into the Ruwenzori Mountains.

In 1952, the Mau Mau rebellion erupted and Stan volunteered to serve in the Kenya Regiment. As given in the Regimental Long Roll he enlisted 23/05/1952; completed six months national service training in Rhodesia on 07/01/1953; was posted to 6<sup>th</sup> King's African Rifles 10/01/1954; awarded a Governor's Commission as 2/Lt on 06/08/1954; posted to 'O' Coy Kenya Regiment 23/11/1954; promoted Lt 07/02/1955; discharged 22/04/1955. These laconic entries conceal more than they reveal.

On his first patrol a Mick (that's what we called MM) was sighted across a deep valley. The section leader Cpl John Lomax [KR4193] split the section, leaving half under Bletzo to keep the enemy under observation, while he led the other half to cross the valley and intercept the man. Why did he appoint Bleazard to be in charge? Possibly because at 23 he was a 'mzee' compared to the rest of



his mates with whom he had recently been training in Rhodesia (most just out of school). Stan could see that the Mick would be out of sight before John and his men were in position, so he acted. At 500 yards he opened fire with a Bren gun. It fired twice before jamming, but one bullet found its mark and the man dropped. First patrol, first two shots fired in action and success; it was an auspicious beginning.

Until Stan [LEFT] joined 'O' Company, he was a tall poppy, but one among quite a few that the Regiment was producing. In 'O' Company he became 2i/c of the unit's Intelligence section under Francis Erskine [KR3599]. They were the only officers in this unit and ran pseudo-gangs. Disguised as Mau Mau they got close to and captured guerrillas, persuaded captives to change sides and lead Erskine and Bleazard's small teams back to their mates. The process was then repeated, taking place so fast that victims were unaware of

their erstwhile comrades' defections. Written thus, it gives a false impression of smooth operations, which were seldom the case. If at very close quarters it proved impossible to overpower and capture their intended prisoners or they were seen through and attacked, Plan B was to shoot the contacts (or be shot).

It was both dangerous and very secret work. When Erskine, who was awarded an MC completed his service, Stan became head of the intelligence unit.

He shunned limelight and his role was not widely appreciated even within the Kenya Regiment itself. Yet it had been followed by Major Frank Kitson of the British Army who in the course of a meteoric career was to become General Sir Frank Kitson, GBE, KCB, MC\*, DL and the British Army's guru on counter-terrorism. As a British Army Major in Kenya, Frank Kitson had developed pseudo-gangs in Kiambu with Eric Holyoak [KR4230] and was instrumental in convincing his superiors that this was by far the most effective way of dealing with cryptic terrorists. [Ed: *Eric was awarded an MM.*]

After the Mau Mau episode Kitson was countering Marxist terrorism in Oman. His experiences in Kenya with pseudo-gangs led him to recruit several ex-Kenya Regiment lads to assist him. Stan was one and in 1958 was given a Captain's commission in the British Army's Royal Pioneer Corps. In this role and attached to the S.A.S he took a team of Boran trackers from northern Kenya to the Oman where he saw action. While yet again recognition of Stan's military competence, he rarely talked about it and few realised that his army career involved service for HMG outside Africa.

After such adrenaline filled military experiences, working for East African Posts & Telegraphs was altogether too small a slot for Bleazard. He wanted to get into conservation in either one of the East African National Park authorities or the Game Departments. At the time formal paper qualifications were not as important as self-reliance, ability to live and work alone, with experienced leadership in either the military or a police service. Stan certainly had such qualities and joined the Kenya Game Department in 1960.

For the next four years he was based on Marsabit Mountain in Kenya's far north and responsible for all fauna conservation matters in the 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> semi-desert Marsabit and Moyale Districts. In terms of career satisfaction these were the most rewarding of his life. Perhaps his most lasting achievements in that post were delineating what became two national parks – Marsabit Mountain and Sibiloi on the shores of Lake Turkana (then Rudolf).

Game Wardens accepted as part of the job that Government used them occasionally as safari guides for V.I.Ps. One instance over which Stan often chuckled was, while Game Warden Marsabit, he was ordered to conduct a rather unpleasant Pom journalist on a camel patrol up the eastern shore of Lake Turkana. This man liked walking some way ahead of the camel train. What was unusual was that he did so with no clothing below the navel exposing sights rarely seen by the sun. On such an occasion this man bumped into a resting lion and to Stan's huge glee, fled up the nearest hillside leaping over and through thorn bushes like an Olympian, while the appalled lion fled in the opposite direction.

Between 1964 and 1966 he was posted as Game Warden Mombasa, responsible for conservation in some 15,000 square kilometres of Kenya's southern coastal hinterlands. The work was interesting, but lacked the independence and lone ranger existence he had so enjoyed at Marsabit. Between 1966 and 1969 he was made Kenya's Deputy Chief Game Warden. Such an office job was not to his liking, but it was the penalty he paid for being a good organiser. This was badly needed in a Department that in a recent court case a magistrate had described as 'Gilbertian' and which needed a steady hand.

He would have succeeded to being the head of that Department but Africanisation of the civil service was proceeding apace and Brits such as he, were being replaced. This process across the continent ruled out further long-term career prospects as a civil servant. Openings in the wildlife realm were reduced to short-term Aid or NGO projects in which science degrees were preferred to proven hands-on law enforcement abilities. In Stan's view, whatever the inadequacies of colonial law enforcement may have been, this preference marked the onset of a steep decline in applied African conservation law (a view I share).

Briefly he tried his hand at professional hunting taking clients on safari, but while a hunter at heart, he found this role not to his liking, so he acquired a commercial flying licence

His CV is a staccato record of his time-limited engagements and subsequent career in Africa:-

1970: Pilot/Administrator for Kenya's Tsavo Research project: flying 400 hours of aerial recce and game counts, responsibility for Project Aircraft, vehicles, equipment, stores and junior staff.

1970-1973: Pilot/Administrator for the United Nations Development Program and Food and Agricultural Organisation Luangwa Valley project in Zambia; mainly research flying 1,200 hours, and general administration.

1979: Assistant Principal Game Warden Malawi Government Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

1980-1983: Freelance professional pilot flying twin-engined light aircraft in Kenya, Sudan and Somalia, but mainly servicing the tourist industry.

1984: a return to his origin as an electrician, supervising major electrical renovations in a fifteen storey building in Nairobi's City Centre – this was a stop-gap job while awaiting the arrival of a visa to move to Australia.

Boring CVs conceal great events. One was that while flying in Zambia a blade of his Cessna's propeller flew off and in the subsequent descent to crash he got out a Mayday call giving his position. It enabled a quick rescue and delivery to hospital, and he and his passenger were lucky to survive. The other was that he married a Zambian lady – Blandi (Blandina), acquired two step-sons by her deceased first husband and sired two daughters in quick succession. His devotion to his two little mulattoes – as he lovingly called them – was later to lead to quite an adventure. Brought up in Kenya's colour-barred environment, it was a bold decision to marry across this social barrier. Yet it proved he was no racist.

As Assistant Chief Game Warden of Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife he was based in Lilongwe, the country's capital, less than three hours drive over the border to Chipata in Zambia that was Blandi's home. Sadly, she did not adapt to Malawi and absconded back to Chipata taking their two daughters – Bonnie and Brenda – with her. What happened next would, in law-abiding countries like Australia and the UK, have been kidnapping and reprehensible, but in independent Africa where law is not so well respected, Stan's self-reliance and independence came to the fore. In such circumstances needs must!

After establishing that Blandi and the girls were living in Chipata on the farm they owned, he planned a raid. Finding himself locked out he gained entrance through the roof, broke through the ceiling, collected his girls, and high-tailed it down back tracks to Lilongwe. The pursuing posse of angry Zambians were denied entry at the border where the Malawians insisted that the issue was

civil rather than criminal and must be pursued through Malawi's courts. Before that could happen, Stan had resigned and gone back to Kenya, putting greater distance between him and Blandi.

He was already considering that with the difficulties for an expatriate Briton getting employment in Kenya, despite having been born there, a relocation to Australia made sense. Even before assuming responsibility for his two daughters, he had been canvassing recommendations from, for example, General Kitson, and the internationally respected New Zealand biologist Graeme Caughley (then working with Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO)). While he never mentioned them, such vignettes indicate how well respected he had become.

With two little girls to care for, what had seemed common sense now became imperative. It was time to start a new life so that his daughters grew up secure in a law-abiding environment. Subordinating his own career inclinations, it became the driving force in his life. While he would never recapture the glory moments of his days in Africa, he nevertheless counted seeing both girls grow into adults as Australians as his supreme achievement. For him it was worth the wrench and pain of leaving Kenya.

Yet children inevitably create their own lives, developing new commitments that dilute dependence on parents. In part their place is occupied by grand-children and Stan took immense pleasure in watching three grand-sons grow and being part of their lives.

Quietly down the years he kept sufficient contact with his ex and step-sons in Zambia for one (Abdon) to make a video eulogy for his father that was played over the internet at Stan's funeral.

Yet as the cycle of life goes on most anticipate a degree of loneliness as their twilight sets in. These are the nostalgia years when looking back over the past can bring many pleasures.

However, as indicated at the start of this obituary, things changed for Stan when Barbara (née Gillett) appeared; The anticipated loneliness as his sun went down turned into the happiest twelve years of his life. Thus while our hearts go out to you, Brenda, Bonnie and Barbara, sons and grand-sons, take comfort from Stan's truly good innings. Small wonder he died satisfied. [RIGHT: STAN AND BARBARA AFTER THEIR WEDDING IN THE MBILIZI EVANGELICAL CHURCH NEAR MBEYA, TANZANIA ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2008].



[Ed: Barbara's grandparents built *The Sparks Hotel* in Naivasha, now *The Lake Naivasha Country Club*. Her uncles, John [KR770] and David Gillett MC [KR769] were well known Ol Kalou farmers.]

Vale Bletzo!

Stan greatly enjoyed the following poem, HOMELAND by Michelle Frost (a once-Zimbabwean writer)

Within my soul, within my mind,  
There lies a place I cannot find.  
Home of my heart, land of my birth.  
Smoke-coloured stone and flame-coloured earth.



Electric skies, shivering heat.  
Blood-red clay beneath my feet.

At night when finally alone,  
I close my eyes – and I am home.  
I kneel and touch the blood-warm sand  
And feel the pulse beneath my hand  
Of an ancient life too old to name,  
In an ancient land too wild to tame.

How can I show you what I feel?  
How can I make this essence real?  
I search for words in dumb frustration  
To try and form some explanation,  
But how can heart and soul be caught  
In one-dimensional written thought?

If love and longing are a fire  
And man consumed by his desire,  
Then this love is no simple flame  
That mortal thought can hold or tame.  
As deep within the earth's own core  
The love of home burns evermore.

But what is home? I hear them say,  
This never was yours anyway.  
You have no birthright to this place,  
Descendant from another race.  
An immigrant? A pioneer?  
You are no longer welcome here.

Whoever said that love made sense?  
"I love" is an "imperfect" tense.  
To love in vain has been man's fate  
From history unto present date.  
I have no grounds for dispensation,  
I know I have no home or nation.

For just one moment in the night  
I am complete, my soul takes flight.  
For just one moment ... then it's gone  
And I am once again undone.  
Never complete, never whole.  
White skin and an African soul.

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## AFLOAT IN THE DESERT: THE ROYAL WAJIR YACHT CLUB

[Peter Fullerton, DC Wajir 1959 to 1960]

[Ed: Ian Ross's article about the Garissa cannon in SITREP LV – pp 4-9, aroused a certain amount of interest and a number of readers enquired about the history of the Royal Wajir Yacht Club (RWYC). Shel Arensen very kindly sent me this article by Peter Fullerton which first appeared in Old Africa Issue 20 in 2009. Peter, who wrote a longer account of the RWYC from which this story has been excerpted, was DC Wajir, and Commodore RWYC from 1959 to 1960. Unless otherwise indicated all photos by Dr Bill Barton, Wajir MO during the mid 1950s.]

1932-1965. This is the story of the Royal Wajir Yacht Club. It is a story and not a history because history requires research, and in this case there is little new to research other than the dusty and alcoholic memories of surviving members. The Club became legendary, partly because of its improbable name, and partly because Wajir was a unique watering hole in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) in more senses than one. Those who served in Wajir count themselves lucky to have had that adventure, and wear the Club tie as a campaign medal. It was an unusual “been there, done that” chapter in our Kenya service.

Wajir first became a Boma in 1912. The previous decade had been a turbulent time in the neighbouring Province of Jubaland, then part of Kenya. In 1900, the Provincial Commissioner (PC) had been murdered by the Somalis while on safari at Liboi (later to become a Kenya Police post on the Somalia border). A King's African Rifles (KAR) punitive force sent to arrest the Ogaden tribesmen responsible was also massacred. Wajir, with its wells, was seen as a strategic place to occupy in the long struggle to disarm the Somalis and stop their southward push into Kenya.

The first District Commissioner (DC) Wajir, S.F. Deck, was posted there in 1912 [Ed: 1914?] with 30 KAR soldiers with instructions “to see that the rightful occupants (the Boran) were re-established on the wells.” It was far too late to achieve such an ambition with limited KAR resources. The “Somali line” was put in many years later between Wajir and Isiolo Districts. Wajir from the start was *de facto* a wholly Somali district.



The fort at Wajir [ABOVE: AS IT WAS IN THE 1950s.] was probably started by Deck as a garrison when he occupied Wajir in 1912, but most of it was built during the 1914 - 18 war. It was vital to safeguard the lives of the Officers, KAR and other government staff against further Somali massacres. In 1915, the neighbouring DC at Serenli in Jubaland was murdered, together with his

whole KAR guard. Col Llewellyn (known as “Long Lu”), then DC Wajir, was ordered to evacuate



the Boma but later returned for another five years remarkable service.

[ABOVE: AERIAL VIEW OF WAJIR – CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY THE RWYC?].

For maybe 20 years after that the DC’s and DO’s quarters remained within the fort, although by 1930 all the Somalis in the NFD were said to have been successfully disarmed. The fort was built of thick limestone walls and local limestone mortar. The perimeter wall was eight feet high and designed so that it could be defended with enfiladed fire.

This brings us to the momentous year 1932 when the Wajir Yacht Club is said to have been founded by the DC, Freddie Jennings. There is a story that a rainstorm in Wajir flooded the Boma and Jennings launched himself in a tin bath outside his office. He then disembarked on the other side of the flood and announced to all present: “I am the founder and first Commodore of the Wajir Yacht Club.” This story became a legend in the Club. I see no reason to disbelieve it. Heavy rain at Wajir has occasionally flooded the Boma. In 1961 the whole area in front of the DC’s house stretching for a quarter of a mile turned into a shallow lake for several days.


There is a rival claimant to the founding of the Club. Colin Campbell is quoted in the Kenya Administration Newsletter in 1985 as follows: “Brigadier John MacNab (KAR) [Ed: *Queen’s Own Cameron Highlanders – later OBE, DSO*] was the sole begetter of the Wajir Yacht Club in 1935. After constructing a serviceable sand yacht out of old bicycles and a substantial yardage of turban cloth, he made his company commander the Master and himself the Bosun.

The establishment of the Club rapidly followed with the DC, Denis Wickham as Commodore and one or two others as members. Rules and uniforms were devised and the mythical Hakim of Habbaswein was declared to be patron. For various reasons, the Club went into virtual abeyance at the end of that year and was not, I think, revived as a going concern until after the war.”

Newsletter continued, “However, Bobby Tatton-Brown has described a visit he made to Wajir in 1938 with the said Denis Wickham. ‘Roger Hurt [Ed: *Later Lt Col, DSO*], commanding the 5<sup>th</sup> KAR detachment, had decided to resuscitate the Club. Wickham as perpetual Commodore was presented with the insignia, a naval type cocked hat, a sword, which ended in the shape of a corkscrew, and heavy epaulettes. The flag, a skull and crossbones, was flown, but I cannot remember whether the traditional champagne bottle was also flown as a storm warning cone.”



[ABOVE: HQ 5<sup>TH</sup> BN THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES – MID-1930S. CAPT ROGER HURT 3<sup>RD</sup> FROM LEFT FRONT ROW. PHOTO SUPPLIED BY SON, ROBIN HURT]

[Ed: *Errata. A close look at the 5 KAR badges above, brought to light that the badge I downloaded for 5 KAR – SITREP LV p 28 - is incorrect; the arabic five  looks like an inverted heart.*]

So when did the Wajir Yacht Club acquire its designation of “Royal?” The story has been handed down that either Jennings or one of the early Commodores was a yachtsman and possibly a member of the Mombasa Yacht Club. He is said to have met HRH Edward Prince of Wales at Mombasa Yacht Club during the Prince’s visit to Kenya. The Commodore told HRH about the Wajir Yacht Club and HRH is said to have replied: “Very good! You may call it the Royal Wajir Yacht Club from now on.”

History does not record whether the Commodore ever wrote to the Palace to get in writing recognition of the award said to have been bestowed by HRH. There are only a few British yacht clubs which have been awarded the title Royal, and it is perhaps unlikely that in the cold light of Palace business such an honour would have been formally given to the Club. But this is a story, not a history, and the name of the Royal Wajir Yacht Club lived on for over thirty years.

However, according to Robert Stanyon, Chief Inspector, Kenya Police at Wajir in 1963-65, and Purser of the Club in those years, there was evidence that the title Royal was officially awarded. Writing in *Rhino Link*, the KAR magazine, a few years ago, Stanyon related that a visit to Wajir had been on HRH’s official programme, but the illness of his father, King George V, caused the visit to be cut short. HRH’s equerry sent a letter of regret and authorised the “Royal” in the Club’s title. History, though, is tiresome and the date of the founding of the Club by Jennings in 1932 does not fit in with either of the two visits made to Kenya in 1928 and 1930 by the Prince of Wales. It is a shame that HRH never mentioned Wajir in his autobiography, ‘A King’s Story’, which chronicled his safaris in East Africa. But the story of HRH’s meeting with the Commodore is too old and hoary to dismiss as just a myth. Could it be that an earlier DC invented the Wajir Yacht Club? - maybe D Storrs Fox who was DC from 1928-29, or possibly J.E.H. Lambert, DC from 1929-30, or maybe a KAR officer even earlier from the days of the military administration of the NFD from 1921-25? I think it’s sufficient to say, “If the RWYC did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it.”

The Rules of the Club were formally recorded in a nice combination of whimsy and etiquette. It is not known when these rules were written. The earliest copy of the rules to survive is one sent by Logan Hook to Dick Matthews, Commodore in 1958. Logan Hook was a retired Commander, RN, who owned the Silverbeck Hotel in Nanyuki, and held the title of Rear-Commodore of the RWYC. He was also the OC of the Mt Kenya Squadron of the League of Empire Frontiersmen, an equally distinguished hard-drinking Kenya club of settlers, KAR officers, White Hunters and ex-servicemen. It was a royalist and swashbuckling version of the British Legion. Reciprocal club rights with the RWYC were formally acknowledged on its notepaper, together with The Whaling Club of Mandera and a host of other Kenya clubs and associations.

Although not stated in the Rules, the DC was always the Hon Commodore of the Club. Prior to 1958, the Club used to meet in the DC's house, known in George Brown's day (Commodore 1955-57) as Admiralty House. Dick Matthews decided that the growing number of members and their drinking habits, especially of the "Thirsty Members" in the KAR (see Rule 7), justified the building of a Club House. In his memoirs he recalls: "A site was selected not far from Admiralty House and I set about building it as cheaply as possible. The design was in the shape of a yacht and measured 30 feet by 20 feet with a thatched *makuti* roof over the stern half of the building. There were two small rooms including the "Spirit Room" and the "Galley" which each measured 10 feet by 10 feet. The walls were made of mud and wattle, and were only about three feet high. Much of the material used in the construction was salvaged from buildings that were damaged as a result of the cloudburst earlier that year. The most expensive part of the Club building was the concrete floor. In the middle of the quarter deck there was a flag mast and a yardarm."

The building resembled a beach *banda* and was cool and airy in the evenings, whether on the quarterdeck or at the bar inside. When the Club was open the Gin Pennant used to be flown from the mast. Later John Golds, (Commodore 1961-64) designed a RWYC burgee – blue background, white camel with a crown over the hump. When the Commodore was on board his broad pennant was also flown. The Club was "launched" in 1959 with a champagne party attended by the PC Paul Kelly.

Robert Stanyon related that the Commodore's regalia consisting of a fore and aft Admiral's cocked hat and gold epaulettes came from various Royal Naval sources. The sword, donated by Lt Cdr Maurice Vernon (see Old Africa Issue 1) was described as follows by Captain *Phillipo* Phillips, Company Commander of the KAR detachment at Wajir in 1935 and honorary Vice-Commodore, RWYC, while Denis Wickham was Commodore: "The ceremonial sword was an Infantry Officer's sword, of which the blade had been heated to a high temperature in an improvised forge, and twisted into something like a corkscrew. I regret I cannot say how this sword was used on ceremonial occasions." Captain Phillips also described two medals, which were part of the Commodore's regalia. "One was a Menelik Dollar, the other a Maria Theresa Dollar (Ed: *Thaler*). Both were suspended from pieces of coloured striped ribbon, probably braces elastic from the Wajir *duka*. The significance of these two medals lay in the citations for their award, the former for "Long Service in Foreign Ports", the latter for 'Retaining Ports During Long Foreign Service:



[Ed: L/R: A MENELIK DOLLAR AND A MARIE THERESA DOLLAR (THALER)]

A treasured piece of Club heritage was an Arab cannon lodged on the quarterdeck. This is said to have been acquired originally by the Garissa Curling Club from Lamu where there is (or was) a line of cannons on the waterfront by the DC's office. The piece was then hi-jacked from Garissa one night by a raiding party from the RWYC. It was used to start regattas with thunder flashes stuffed down the barrel. There was also a ship's bell, which hung over the bar and was rung to call members to order.

Once the Club was built, it was open most evenings for anyone in the Boma who was in post and thirsty. The club also opened regularly midday on Sundays. At that time the resident members were: the DC and DO; ASP, Chief Inspector, Special Branch Inspector, and Police Clerk; the Medical Officer, the Officers and WO's of the KAR Detachment; and Akbarali Lalji Mangalji, owner of the main store in Wajir. He was honorary Chandler of the Club as his Mercedes truck was the Club's lifeline for supplies from Nanyuki and was a very popular member of the Club. When challenged by a Muslim friend about selling bacon and booze to the Wazungu from the back of his store, Akbarali coined the memorable phrase: "*Ndiyo Bwana, lakini business haina haramu.*"

A typical evening in the Boma started at 5 pm in the squash court where a thirst was easily acquired in the 85° F evening glow. Squash courts were reputed to have been built in all NFD bomas in the 1950s on the advice of a government head-shrinker after a suicide on one of the stations.

There followed at sunset the regular ceremony of lowering the flag. The Kenya Police bugler sounded the last post from the tower of the fort, and the whole Boma was supposed to come to a stop and stand facing in the direction of the fort. John Golds recalls: "Good old Colonial stuff, which I continued after Independence, only changing the flag."

The Club opened after the last post, by which time the sun (whether visible or not) could be considered to have dipped beneath the yardarm. Any junior member who could be trusted to give the right change tended the bar. Tusker and Allsops Whitecap were the standard fare, but brandy and coke sold well, or very long whiskies to quench the initial thirst. Most evenings the Club closed at about 8 pm when members tottered back to their mutton and rice supper, cooked by hurricane lamp and kept edible miraculously by patient *mpishis*.

Club members played liar dice endlessly. Unlike proper poker dice, it is impractical to bet on and becomes more hilarious and players emboldened by drink tell bigger and bigger porkies. Robert Stanyon recalls that "the World Series Liar Dice Championships were held at the Club in 1963. And the winner by a mile was the Irish entrant and Ship's Surgeon, Jimmy Clearkin."

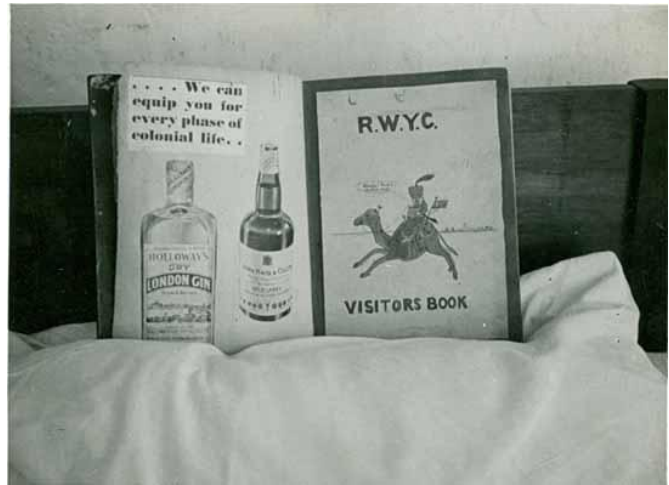
Club Regattas tended to be held on public holidays, or to welcome VIP's or guests passing through Wajir. Formal dress on these occasions was "Red Sea Rig," which consisted of a *kikoi* and black bow. (The word topless had by then not reached the dictionary.) Various formalities were observed, such as a genuflection to the Club's patron, the Hakim of Habbaswein. This mythical figure had been metamorphosed at some early date into an elegant wooden carving of a camel, clad in ornamental leatherwork. The Hakim, who presided over the bar, is never known to have spoken, but featured in Club Ballads to such music as "She'll be coming round the mountain..."

One evening at the bar in 1960 it was decided to design a Club tie for less formal occasions. Robin Dalglish, DO, and David Hanson (then Major and OC the KAR company at Wajir) were given the task. They chose a royal blue tie with a camel, the ship of the desert, surmounted by a crown. Robin asked his father, a retired architect in England, to produce a blueprint for the design, which was then made by Lewin's in Jermyn Street.



The tie [LEFT] has become the most enduring relic of the Club. The Mandra Whaling Club, the Garissa Curling Club, the Blue Turtle Club from Moyale and the Bath Club at Isiolo all later produced ties of their own.

The Club visitors' book [RIGHT] was another hallowed possession. Over the years many famous names were inscribed in it – Governors, PCs, GOCs, Police Commissioners, even dignitaries of the church.



The custom was to write a spoof occupation opposite the name, such as Colonel

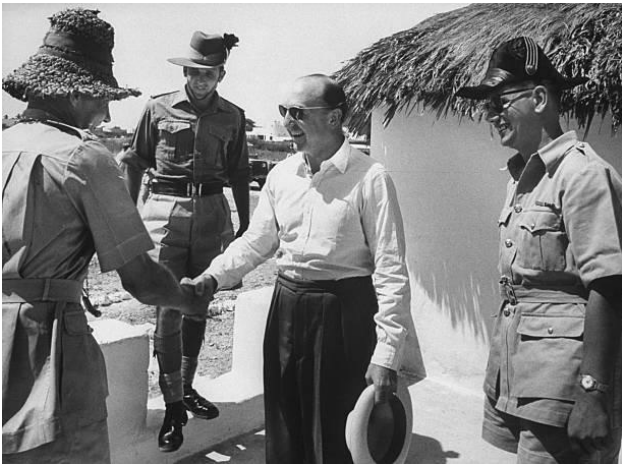
Blimp, Tea Taster to the Turf Club. Sir Evelyn Baring wrote opposite his own entry: "Keeper of a Lunatic Asylum."

Dick Matthews, then Commodore, recalls Governor Baring's visit in 1959, which stretched the Boma's resources to the limit. He was accompanied by *Monkey* Johnson (Minister for African Affairs), Paul Kelly (PC), Griff Griffith (ACP Isiolo), Brigadier Goode (Commanding Officer KAR), HE's ADC, a Press Officer, and a personal servant to look after HE's special diet. Wajir had never seen such a visit. The whole party stayed the night. The RWYC held a cocktail party and a buffet supper on the roof of Admiralty House. Everyone in the Boma had a chance to chat with HE. The following day there was a ceremonial parade of KAR, Kenya Police and Dubas, and HE took the salute at the Beating of Retreat by the KAR band.

Two years later another Governor, Sir Patrick Renison, visited Wajir. The Kenya Police Band was on parade, with Police and Dubas platoons. John Brown was Special Branch Officer and, being an ex-Rangers footballer, taught the band to play "The Sash my Father Wore" with fifes and drums, which they played at the Beating of Retreat. Sir Patrick, (a good Irishman, but in no way a left-footer) turned to me just before he took the salute and murmured, "I think I've heard this tune before." The band also played "Slattery's Mounted Foot," another traditional Orange march. Jimmy Clearkin, the MO and a good Catholic from Antrim, watched the parade and took it with a smile.

A Club tradition expected visitors to donate a hat to the Club. Occasionally the visitor resisted and more than one visitor left irritated that his headgear had gone missing, to appear in the Club's collection later. It was the Purser's job, according to Robert Stanyon, to label and display these trophies. The collection included three or four governor's hats, a couple of GOC's and several itinerant MP's.

John Golds recalls an embarrassing moment: "The British Ambassador in Ethiopia and his most charming wife came to a black tie do. She was wearing a most fetching huge wide-brimmed hat, which I was convinced was for our benefit in the knowledge that we collected hats and nailed them to the wall. When I was ceremoniously removing her hat I was horrified to find she was wearing a wig and as I lifted the hat her hair came as well. All later must have been forgiven, as I remember, just, dancing the Lambeth Walk down the main street of Wajir."



Still on the subject of hats, John Profumo came to the Club wearing one of his wife's (Valerie Hobson) extravagant Ascot hats and donated it on his visit to Wajir.

This visit deserves a chapter of its own. John Golds remembers: "This was John Profumo's (Minister of War, now known rather more tactfully as Minister of Defence) last overseas visit before he had to resign. He was staying with me for a couple of days and we invited him to one of our famous RWYC black tie parties. All our VIP guests arrived in dinner jackets to

find all the Wajir members in *kikois* and black ties only. A great party resulted during which John Profumo offered us the reciprocal rights to the House of Commons Yacht Club.

[ABOVE L/R: UNKNOWN OFFICIAL WEARING VALERIE HOBSON'S HAT; CAPT DAVID GODDARD 3 KAR; JOHN PROFUMO AND JOHN GOLDS WEARING THE COMODORE'S HAT. MOD PHOTO]

"Later that evening John Profumo looked through our Playboy calendar and wrote on the August entry: 'This is mine. Keep off. John Profumo, Minister for War.'

"Sadly John Profumo had to resign soon after his visit and this signed picture became of particular value to the Club. So we had it framed. Some months later as the Somali troubles heated up I used to fly up a bunch of worldwide newspaper reporters every fortnight for a briefing. At the end of each briefing, in an effort to improve my rating in the world press, I used to take them to the Club and give them a few G&Ts before their departure. One day on our return to the bar we found that the picture was missing. As the plane with about 20 newspapermen was still in Wajir airspace, I sent a signal to the pilot to ask the newsmen to return the picture to him. He wirelessed back that they were all insulted and denied the allegation most strongly. I, by then full of G&T, cancelled his flight plan and ordered him to return. By the time the furious pilot landed back in Wajir, full of equally furious journalists, I was getting somewhat nervous. However, all ended up well when an embarrassed Times reporter finally admitted he had taken it. He was set upon by the other newspapermen. I, a very relieved DC, had the picture burnt."

After the Club premises had been built a tennis court and swimming pool were added. I completed the projects on the cheap during my time in Wajir from 1959-1961 as no official funds were forthcoming. The pool was built above ground on limestone bedrock with shallow four-foot walls of concrete block. I never saw the pool completed but Robert Stanyon described it recently in Rhino Link: "The pool was filled by pump from a borehole at the bottom of the Doctor's garden and drained by gravity. It was fine for about five days after filling and then began to go green despite the Anabac disinfectant (recommended by Shell as anti-algae, though intended for washing cows' udders). So the procedure was to unscrew the plug and whoosh! A very temporary pond was created around the Club before the water seeped down into the aquifer. We used to leave a few inches in the bottom of the pool to facilitate side scrubbing and general cleaning. By the next day there would be a small oasis of lush greenery where the water had seeped, already colonised by those large very long-eared hares. After a couple of hours all was shipshape, and refilling commenced."

John Norris invented a challenge called "Drink a pint and walk a mile" to avert Sunday boredom at the Boma. John was Transport Officer for the NFD and a furious walker. His challenge was to walk each mile in under fifteen minutes and sink a pint before setting off again in the midday sun. Mad Dogs and Englishmen - I think he won his own challenge easily with six pints and seven miles.



Thus ends my story of the Royal Wajir Yacht Club. But perhaps Kipling deserves the last lines as the true Poet Laureate of the Royal Wajir Yacht club.

“We sailed wherever a ship could sail.  
We founded many a mighty state.  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Through craven fear of being great.”

#### Rules of the Club

1. The Club shall be styled “The Royal Wajir Yacht Club.”
2. The object of the Club shall be to encourage sailing before the wind, swinging the lead, profligacy on the High Seas and seeing the sun sink below the yardarm.
3. The Club shall consist of Ordinary Members, Extraordinary Members and Most Amazing Members. An ordinary Member shall be deemed to have become an Extraordinary Member after three months residence in Wajir.
4. An Ordinary Member and an Extraordinary Member shall be one who is duly elected and does not pay his Entrance Fee or Annual Subscription.
5. A member who pays his Entrance Fee or Annual Subscription shall be deemed a Most Amazing Member.
6. The amount of the Entrance Fee and the Annual Subscription Fee shall be optional. In the event of it ever being paid, the whole amount shall be expended on liquid refreshment for the Commodore and Officers.
7. Officer of His Majesty’s Naval, Military and Air Forces shall be considered Thirsty Members during their stay in Wajir.
8. The wives and lady friends (sweeties) of members are welcomed to the Club premises at any hour of the day or night, at owner’s risk.
9. The Club Flag shall be flown on Saints Days, Public Holidays and all Regatta Days.
10. Members are reminded that on Regatta Days, craft temporarily out of control must be allowed right of way, whether luffing, hiccoughing, scudding before the wind or merely heaving to. All assistance must be given to those coming alongside.
11. Any article found in or near the Club must be returned to the owner. This does not include wives or sweeties of members.
12. Any tanker or other vessel containing crude oil, raw spirit or pisco must fly the “Blue Peter” whilst at anchor in Club waters.

[Ed: *I should have researched this article much earlier because the two men who could have provided more info, namely Bob Stanyon and David Goddard, sadly, passed away a few years ago.*]

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#### COLIN STEPHEN GWINNETT BOMPAS [KR4926]

[18<sup>th</sup> July 1933 – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020]

[friend Richard Law]



[Ed: *When I included Colin’s article about his experiences during the Emergency in SITREP LV pp 30-36, little was I to know that it would be Part 1 of his eulogy. I only got to know Colin [LEFT] when he sat at our table at the Fern Hill KRA lunches, and after reading the following two tributes I came to realise that behind that quietly spoken demeanor lay a multi-talented university graduate, and a caring man.*]

Colin Stephen Gwinnett Bompas was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1933, the second of three sons to Frederick Gwinnett Bompas. He attended St Mary's private boy's day school in Nairobi for both his primary and secondary education. The school was inaugurated in 1939 at the outbreak of the Second World War, the year in which Colin turned six. Colin would have been one of St Mary's earliest pupils who grew with the school as it became a significant institution.

When the 'Emergency' was declared in Kenya, Colin was allowed by the 'powers that be' to enrol at the University of Cape Town, and on his first leave home he joined the KPR (Kenya Police Reserve) in Nairobi. Colin's very recently written 'Memories' record what he did through the years of the Mau Mau/British Colonial conflict from 1952 to 1960.

After recovering from a bout of tick bite fever he transferred to a Home Guard post near Mt. Kenya. His experiences and promotions reflect something of his capabilities as a young man. His humanity and compassion shine through in his writings. During this time of active involvement Colin matured from a teenager to a young man ready for marriage and to forge a career.



Post the hostilities in Kenya Colin found employment with NCR (National Cash Registers) in Nairobi.

In 1962 he married Rosie (Rosemary June Elizabeth Crow) in Nairobi [LEFT] where they commenced married life pre-Kenyan Independence in 1963. During this time he exercised his practical skills by building a wooden boat which he later left at the dam on the farm of Rosie's brother Gordon and sister-in-law Diana Crow.

Colin and Rosemary emigrated to South Africa and after working briefly in Johannesburg they moved to Durban where Colin was employed by Freight Marine, and became involved on the computer side of the business and developed his computer skills.

In the early 1980's Colin decided to start a small business, developing computer-based solutions (mainly accounting). He wrote a sophisticated system for the South Coast Farmers Co-Op and then several other systems for various clients, Pretoria Portland Cement and the Duran Corporation being some of these. Colin, owner-built a fine home in Westville. It was from the upper storey of this building that he conducted his business.

Colin and Rosie became members of St Elizabeth's Anglican Church in Westville where Colin was instrumental in starting a 5.30am Friday intercession group almost 40 years ago, and was still actively involved the week before he died. Colin became a 'religious worker' in the Westville Prison where he developed a strong, caring prison ministry, holding regular meetings and developing relationships over many years. He influenced numerous lives through his faithful preaching and portrayal of Jesus Christ.

This ministry opened the door and paved the way for a sustained and faithful ministry for the lead elder of WCF (formerly Westville Christian Fellowship and now West City Fellowship), Peter Van Niekerk and member Ms Willa Fourie. It led to many dozens of inmates being baptized and numerous Restorative Justice courses incorporating VOD (Victim Offender Dialogue).

After serving their time, three of the converted inmates went on to successfully start and run their own Churches which are still operating at this time.

After selling the business and home in Westville, the Bompas's moved to Amber Glen in the pleasant climes of Howick in the Natal Midlands.

Rosemary passed away there in 2012 during the 50<sup>th</sup> year of their marriage. Colin had been a loving and devoted husband throughout the half century of their marriage and through the many challenges of the unstable health conditions that Rosie encountered.

During the eight years after Rosemary's death Colin lived in different rented units in the Ambers of Howick.

For a while he had his elder brother Geoffrey's youngest son Jeremiah staying with him. Generally called Jeremy, he was affected from birth by oxygen deprivation. A large man now of almost 60 years of age, it became too much for Colin in his 80s.

He eventually saw Jeremy placed in an ideal home, 'Seventh Heaven' in nearby Hilton. There Colin regularly visited him up until the 2020 'lockdown' prevented him from doing so. Colin again showed his caring and compassion through being this stable father-figure to Jeremy, conducting Bible study sessions with him and others there and setting him up for his life ahead financially.

By the Grace of God and the Kenya Regiment Association KZN Colin spent his final years in a Moth cottage in Howick.

He had become a faithful member of Mt Zion Church during this time.

Colin sorely missed his Rosie and his final wish, to have his remains buried alongside hers in the Howick West Cemetery, was fulfilled.

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Michael Imbert [KR4288] writes: The Bompases were a family of solid worth and integrity. They had three households in Muthaiga:

George, an accountant was the patriarch. Married to Alice Bowker they had two sons, George and Fred and daughter Agnes.

Fred and his wife Elizabeth (née Ellis) who lived closest to us had three sons, Jeffrey, Colin and Ian. Jeffrey and I were toddlers together and friends ever since. Colin tagged along when he was older. Fred [KR17] was among the first of the KR Officers.

In 1939, Jeffrey and I went to St Mary's School, and Colin followed later. From St Mary's I went to secondary school in South Africa and then in Devon and lost sight of Colin.

In 1948, I met Jeffrey in London where he was busily studying Architecture. Later he went to UCT to get a degree in Commercial Art. He also acquired a wife called Effie and they went to live in Durban. An unhappy discovery was Ian Bompas, the youngest of the three brothers, stricken with polio and confined to an iron lung for the rest of his life, dying in Durban many years later.

In 1955, I was stationed in Nakuru and bumped into Colin doing his stint at KRTC, Lanet. In the late 50s Colin married Rosemary, sister of Gordon Crow. Ann and I attended the wedding and the reception which was held in the garden of Stephen Ellis, Colin's uncle, the first warden of Nairobi National Park

Life in independent Kenya became increasingly difficult and Freddie took his wife Elsie and Ian to Durban where Jeffrey and Colin lived nearby;

Colin and Rosemary had no children and Jeffrey and Effie had three, Michael, Peter and Jeremy.

Michael and Peter were both killed in separate motor accidents. Jeremy found work in the Railways.

Initially Colin worked for NCR and when he was made redundant he started his own IT business, operating from their home in Westville. Many years later we heard that Colin and Rosemary had moved to Howick.

He was conscientious, kind and decent man. God rest him.

[Ed: Colin played rugby for Impala Sports Club in 1958, 1959 - winners of the Nairobi District Championship in 1959, and was reserve when Impala SC, captained by S.P. Wheeler [KR7224] and Nondies were joint holders of the Enterprise Cup in 1961.]

#### IMPALA SPORTS CLUB RUGBY SECTION – 1958



**L/R: BACK ROW: A. DRUMMOND (COACH); PADDY RAINSFORD; COLIN BOMPAS [KR4926]; A FREESTONE; MIKE ANDREWS [KR65808]; CG WAIN; RW GUDGEON; JB KENILWORTH; M CUTLER; RAG JONES [KR4607]; DOUG MILES [KR3589]  
2<sup>ND</sup> ROW: F LAWSON; RA SNADDON; LH BOOYSE; H ADAMS (C); J CHUBB; JG BELL [KR4550]; IJ LOUW  
FRONT ROW: TERRY TORY [KR6339]; TED DAVID [KR6326]; J LYNCH; DENNIS JONES [KR3614]; R BWYE**

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## EXERCISE BLENHEIM QUEST

[Yoyo Volak]

[Ed: May 2006 *mini-SITREP XXVIII* – pp33-35 carried Yoyo's original article, 'Hunt for Z-7763', submitted by Tom Lawrence. In 2015, a surviving member of one of the deceased air crew contacted Yoyo which led to a memorial service in the Nanyuki War Cemetery. But first, the original article.]

In 2002, a local logger happened upon what looked like the remains of a crashed aircraft [RIGHT] deep in the bamboo forest high up on the southern slopes of Mount Kenya. He reported his find to Bongo Woodley, Chief Warden of the Kenya Wildlife Service responsible for the Mount Kenya area at the time. Bongo took photographs of the wreckage and rubbings of serial numbers and, believing it was the wreckage of a British warplane, sent them to the Personal Management Agency for the Royal Air Force in UK.



In May 2002, I was invited to join a group of British soldiers assigned to Exercise Blenheim Quest and to the task of resolving the mystery of an RAF bomber that went missing in Kenya 75 years ago. Here is an abridged account of the original article that I wrote fifteen years ago and the concluding chapter to this extraordinary story.



From the photographs it was thought to be a British Blenheim Bomber [LEFT] so the expert judgement of John Romain, Managing Director of the Aircraft Restoration Company in Duxford UK, and authority in vintage classic aircraft, was sought. John confirmed that it was a Blenheim Bomber, and taking all the serial numbers he cross-referenced them with data from war records.

From one number, Z-7763, John traced the aircraft back to 1941 as a Blenheim Bomber built at Rootes car factory in Birmingham, UK, which was used for manufacturing aircraft during the war

years. From there the aircraft was sent to Kenya where it became part of the Operation Training Unit for Commonwealth pilots based in Nanyuki.

Cross-referencing his data once more, this time with the Public Records Office in London, John uncovered the fate of Bomber Z-7763, out of Nanyuki, Kenya. He found that four young airmen were reported missing in action on the night of the Thursday July 23rd 1942. He also discovered that Bomber Z-7763 went missing on a Navex (Navigation Exercise) out of Nanyuki on the same date with a young South African crew on board. The wreckage was never found and the names of the four crew members make up the 3,000 British and Commonwealth airmen who went missing in action during WWII and are listed on the war memorial in El Alamein in Egypt.

What is an uncanny coincidence is that John made this discovery on Thursday 23rd July 2002 - exactly 60 years later to the day. It was now just a question of verifying that the wreckage found on Mount Kenya was indeed the wreckage of Bomber Z-7763. For this John Romain flew to Kenya and in the rarefied air at 8,000 feet on the southern slopes of Mount Kenya, a party of six BATLSK (British Army Training Liaison Staff in Kenya) personnel, John Romain and I began the 10,000-foot climb to the crash site to formally identify the aircraft.

Exercise Blenheim Quest proved to be a gruellingly difficult climb. Just four to seven kilometres from base camp took nine hours, cutting a narrow track through dense bamboo forest with elephant in evidence all around us. Our progress was painfully slow and landmarks would totally disappear in seconds in a swirl of cloud.

On the upper slopes of Mount Kenya the combination of altitude and sitting astride the Equator results in forms of vegetation peculiar to the East African mountains but it was mostly through dense bamboo that Exercise Blenheim Quest had to trek, occasionally giving way to montane forest where the ancient African Olives and Hagenia trees dripped eerily with thick festoons of 'Old Man's Beard', and moisture.

In addition to the thin air, the dense bamboo and the heavy going under foot, the southern slopes of Mount Kenya are unforgiving and hostile. It is elephant country and the days are humid and airless in the forest. At over 8,000 feet the sunlight pierces through the canopy in bright shafts, then in seconds the clouds roll in and the bamboo takes on an ethereal, ghost-like quality, the light goes and the forest becomes cold, gloomy and even more inhospitable. Not infrequent showers of freezing rain would soak us through, then leave us just as suddenly with no way to dry out.

Trooping in single file, the soldiers armed with the SA80 rifle [RIGHT], the expedition seemed almost like a scene out of 'Apocalypse Now'. We stopped several times for a 'smoke' and to brew-up some NAAFI tea from our composite rations. On some of these occasions three or four soldiers would go ahead to cut a track through the very difficult sections giving us civvies a chance to rest and, sucking on British Army issue boiled sweets, ponder the fact that it is no wonder the fate of Bomber Z-7763 has remained a secret of the mountain for so long.



After nine hours and an hour before darkness, the group finally arrived at the crash site. We camped that night between the elephant tracks and trees, the soldiers taking turns throughout the night to

'stag-on' and keep guard against elephants. They were kept distant company most of the night by a family of cerval cats, obviously curious about our intrusion into their remote and unmapped territory.



[LEFT: CENTRE JOHN ROMAIN AND YOYO FLANKED BY BATLSK MEMBERS]

At daybreak the next morning we went to excavate the wreck. It is not surprising that it lay so long, undetected, for it lies crumpled and rusting in the side of the mountain at over 10,000 feet, almost permanently in the clouds and deep in virgin montane forest. It is not dramatic or even particularly remarkable, and it would not be worthy of comment were it not the grave site of four young airmen who have lain forgotten for over 60 years. It is a sad and desolate place. The cloud base rolled in bringing a damp chill to the air.

We dug and pulled at the wreckage trying to find unequivocal proof that this was indeed the Blenheim Bomber Z-7763. There was plenty of it and much sad evidence that the plane flew into the mountainside, probably in the same conditions that we were

competing with and just misjudged the altitude in the darkness and mist.

Most of the wreckage was too rusty or damaged to be immediately recognisable to anyone other than John, but we were able to salvage some fascinating war memorabilia including a pair of rusted Browning machine guns that the rear gunners would have used, rounds of ammunition still in belts, parachute clasps unreleased and the flare gun still in its holster, evidence pointing to the fact that the crew had no time to save themselves, if they ever realised they were in peril.

The impact of the crash was enormous - we found the rudder pedal moulded to the shape of the pilot's foot, and the starboard engine was buried in vegetation some 30 metres from the main bulk of the wreckage. We also found remains of the crew - shoes, buttons, parachute silk and even some bones which we bagged up ready for removal once the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Personal Management Agency have traced any next-of-kin.

But at least the fate of Blenheim Z-7763 had finally been resolved and the names 2nd Lt C. H Allen; 2nd Lt H.J. P Lemmer; Sgt. S. Eliastam and Sgt. Lloyd Murray can now be removed from the El Alamein War Memorial for airmen listed as missing in action.

Finally, evidence of the identity of the wrecked aircraft Blenheim Z7763 painted on the small bomb rack

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Despite the Publication of this original unabridged article in several magazines in 2002, no next-of-kin came forward, until 2015.

I am not on Facebook, my surname has changed three times in the last ten years, I am not easy to trace, so it was with some surprise that in September 2016, while on holiday in France, I received an e-mail from Loisaba Lodge (Laikipia), where I have worked in the past, informing me that

someone was trying to contact me in connection with an article I had written, and could I get in touch. An hour later, I found myself speaking on Skype to Michael Eliastam in Florida, nephew of Simon Eliastam, one of the crew who had gone down with the Blenheim Z-7763 in 1942.

Simon was Michael's mother's much loved younger brother. She had spent the rest of her life trying to discover what had happened to him and Michael had taken up the quest after her death.

My original article 'Hunt for Z-7763' was printed in several publications in 2002, and in the course of his relentless search for information, Michael finally came across it in 2015 in a back issue of the British Forces 'Soldier' magazine. He realised immediately he had found a lead to the mystery surrounding the disappearance of his uncle Simon.

But his search was not over yet, Michael still had to find me.

In 2015, I had written a short article about Loisaba Wilderness, which unbeknown to me, had been published in a Chinese travel magazine. Simon, surfing the internet trying to trace me, my name had come up as author of this article and, bizarrely, it was through a Chinese travel magazine that he finally traced me to Loisaba, and 'ran me to ground' in France. Michael was thrilled to have finally found a concrete point of reference and during our long Skype call I dredged up as many details of Z-7763 as I could remember.

I was also delighted to hear that other next-of-kin of the missing airmen had also come forward as a result of a chance meeting between Bongo's brother Dani Woodley and the nephew of 2nd Lt H.J. P Lemmer. Bongo sent him a copy of the article and he too was able to confirm he was next-of-kin.

In 2015 the efforts of General Gert Opperman from the Ebo Trust, an organisation formed to trace and recover the bodies of South African soldiers killed in action abroad, finally traced the other two families through the assistance of several genealogists.

Last month, Bongo Woodley, Tom Lawrence (who has been assisting General Opperman) and I were invited to Nanyuki to attend the Memorial Service for the fallen crewmen of Flight Z-7763.

Arranged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, four headstones have been erected in the Nanyuki War Memorial Cemetery to commemorate:

2nd Lt Charles Allen  
2nd Lt Hendrik (Bokkie) Lemmer  
Air Sgt Simon Eliastam  
Air Sgt Lloyd Murray





In a moving ceremony conducted by Rev. J.G. Jamieson, representatives of the four families laid wreaths at the headstones and, following the Last Post and Two Minute's Silence, after 75 years the four souls on board Bomber Z 7763 were finally laid to rest.



L/R: VINTAGE AIRCRAFT EXPERT JOHN ROMAIN, YOYO VOLAK, TOM LAWRENCE, NIECE AND NEPHEW OF 2ND LT BOKKIE LEMMER NAN & RUSTY HUSTLER; GENERAL GERT OPPERMAN SD, SM, MMM (EBO TRUST), CAPTAIN MARTIN THOMPSON (BATUK) AND BONGO WOODLEY.

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CHARLES RICHMOND COBB [KR6799]

[22<sup>nd</sup> February 1940 to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020]

[Ed: *Andy sent me the following article some seven years ago and I think it a fitting tribute to a man dedicated to the conservation of our marine life. Please note that the views herein were Andy's and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor nor those of the Association.*]

Andy was born in Athi, Kenya 29/02/1940. His parents, Charles and Teddy Cobb owned a sisal farm in Thika. Schooled in Jersey and King's School Canterbury, Andy attended university exiting with an engineering degree. On returning to Kenya worked in Thika, Tanzania and Mombasa before moving to South Africa.



[LEFT: ANDY AND JANE BEFORE MOVING TO THE CAPE IN 2013]

Jane's father, John Alexander Campbell [KR262] was born in Hythe, Kent and arrived in Kenya 28<sup>th</sup> September 1936. He was employed as a farm assistant in Molo before enlisting into the Regiment on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1939 and attached to 4<sup>th</sup> (U) KAR; commissioned into the Bn on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1940.

Amongst her father's papers was a diary - writer unknown, which she typed and forwarded to your editor in the hope that the identity of the author could be established.

## TRIBULATIONS AND THE FIGHT FOR CONSERVATION, WITH NOTED ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES!

We came to SA in 1981, to start co-operative farming in the Zulu tribal areas. However, on arrival I was placed with the transport section of the KwaZulu Development Corporation (KDC), responsible for the township MAN buses, and reconditioning tractors for soft loans. It was not long before I realised the organisation was corrupt, so told the KDC Legal Adviser that I was going back to Kenya. I was asked to provide evidence and nine months later gave a full dossier. The Legal Adviser presented it to the KDC CEO. Within two hours I was sacked and by the end of the day there was no evidence I was ever employed.

I realised my phone was tapped and deliberately talked rubbish when on the phone. The Legal Adviser told me there was 'a hit' on me by the contract killers.

I think there was confusion as to me possibly being a '*Stom Engelsman Immigrant*'? I had to wait three months for a hearing with Bishop Zulu (Chairman of the KDC Board) with Arthur Konikrammer present. This resulted in a commission of inquiry. My report was substantiated and all the people involved dismissed with a Golden handshake. There was no court appearance. The KDC then became the KwaZulu-Natal Financial Corporation (KFC), and now Ithala, and the corruption continues.

The Legal Adviser was squeezed out of SA and now as a New Zealander, has his own legal consultancy in Australia.

Service as a Police Diver. For eight years I served as a South African Police (SAP) reservist (Sgt) diver with my own section. When I left was awarded the SAP 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Medal.

Pioneering Shark Diving. In 1982, I took the first boatload of chartered divers to the Aliwal Shoal (off Umkomaas) and pioneered the style of diving and shark diving; likewise at the Protea Banks (off Shelley Beach) where I also pioneered advanced shark diving.

### Exposing South African Industrial and Cellulose Corporation's (SAICCOR) Pollution.

In the Apartheid era 'Joe Soap' had no say, however I took on SAPPI SAICCOR with their sulphur emissions and with the help of the Natal Technicon, their results were so damning, SAICCOR had to spend mega bucks in up-grading their coal fired boiler flume scrubbers. I also took them on re: their chlorine bleaching and this was changed to ozone bleaching. I tried through the media to expose marine pollution but failed.

The Tourism Act for Marine Tour Guiding. However, the Mandela/De Klerk transition government was my time, as I took part in the workshops rewriting the laws and the constitution of SA. I attended as many of the workshops in KZN as possible, where Tourism and the sustainability of our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) were concerned.

In one of the Tourism workshops, with Jacob Zuma in the chair I got the Ocean to be managed on a sustainable basis.

### Shark Finning & Monitoring Foreign Fishing Vessel Activities

At another environmental workshop, with Ina Cronje chairing, I got shark finning banned and any foreign vessel fishing in SA's EEZ, had to have a SA Observer on board.

Obviously from my introductory experience, I had little respect for SA government officials in following my passion, this resulted in three senior officials from the Natal Parks Board, coming to my house and telling me that they agreed with what I said, but as I represented no one, suggested I ‘Shut Up’.

### My Relationship with Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA)

I then approached WESSA to appoint me as a Marine lobby non-government organisation (NGO); this gave birth to Coastwatch, with which I served for a few years. However, during this time I had to have a life-saving operation to remove a cancerous growth, during which I nearly died because of oxygen starvation resulting in some brain damage, which took four years to come right. Then, I realised my ‘hard drive’ started potholing and I was diagnosed as having many mini-strokes of the brain. I had a pacemaker fitted and got my life back.

Since the onset of the mini-strokes started there were a number of ‘problems, the main one was not remembering whether or not I had presented an issue and was subject to repetition; or overlooking points during question time. I was also very frustrated that my original mission statements for Coastwatch, which included many marine issues, such as the plight of the sharks, dolphins, overfishing, etc, were being ignored.

Rolf Collins and I tried to get Coastwatch on board, to support the establishment of an Ocean Threat information/call centre, using military technology. This was not accepted by the WESSA board because of the fear of losing funding. When we brought pressure to bear on corporations whose effluent was killing and compromising the existence of ocean life; Rolf and I were rudely blown off by the Chairman of the time at a Coastwatch Saturday meeting, so we both left Coastwatch.

### Lobbying for the Aliwal Shoal as a Marine Protected Area (MPA)

My continual lobbying resulted in the Aliwal Shoal Forum, and supported by Grant Trebble we were nominated to represent Conservation. Grant had access to the Australian Barrier Reef management plan and this was the core in getting the Aliwal Shoal as an MPA. The Shoal is now recognised as one of the top ten dive sites of the World.

We had an excellent facilitator in Dr. Michael Schleyer of Oceanographic Research Institute (ORI). Commercial fishermen opted out as the Aliwal Shoal was dead to them; there was 100% attendance of the spearfishing representatives and a very irregular attendance of scuba diver representatives.

SAICCOR threatened me twice with legal action. Further I was served by the Umkomaas Town Board with a pending prosecution, as to launch-site irregularities. The Spearfishing Association gave me a writ and a lawyer pro bono to squash the pending case. A spearfishing club wanted to sue me as the reporter quoted my adjective they were “Bastards” for shooting a potato bass, a fully protected fish. There was a group in Johannesburg raising funds so I would respond; the Durban spear fishing club chickened out.

My efforts were recognised and I was nominated for the KZN Wildlife conservation award, in September. 1998.

### Pioneering Properly Qualified Marine and Shark Diving Guides

In the days of South African Tourism (SATOUR) I became the first person in SA to be a fully accredited Marine and Shark Diving Guide. Since 1991, as a National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI) & Scuba Schools International (SSI) Instructor, I held many courses for Marine

Environment and Shark diving. SATOUR became SAT (South African Tourism) and I became the first fully accredited trainer and assessor of Underwater Marine and Shark Diving Guides, which resulted in all the accredited Underwater Marine and Shark Diving Guides, forming the Professional Underwater Guides Association of SA (PUGASA), to represent all Under Water Marine and Shark Diving Guides.

At the end of 2007, the Chief Registrar of Guides, Dr. Joseph Raputsoe, named to me, that the NAUI Chapter Manger of Drum Beat Academy (Leaders in Tourism & Hospitality) Johannesburg together with a corrupt South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) manager, digitally removed all reference to do with Underwater Guiding and me as a trainer and Assessor; he subsequently submitted unit standards for Scuba Guiding, nothing to do with Guiding but re-assessing Dive Master skills. The corrupt Dept of Labour put me out of business.

### My uShaka Marine World Lobbying

On two different occasions I was able to stop the use of the 'Jaws' myth being used in advertising to draw the public to uShaka (*Zulu word for Shark*). The second time I was asked by SeaWorld to get involved was when uShaka was being built; I lobbied for the shark tank to be an environment, at least three circuits for the raggies to use and some caves in which to sleep, and large enough for the bull sharks to doze.

I achieved a complete failure, as the raggies are now shut down in what is referred to as captive slumber. The Aquarium designers did not even know how a bull shark sleeps and just created a hole in the ground and certainly not big enough for the bull shark to sleep in.

I failed again when there was an open lobby to rename the Natal Rugby team, I fought to stop the Jaws myth being used and not to use the name 'Sharks'. My suggestion was 'Orca' as it is an intelligent animal that has a game plan and is 'Black & White'.

My Book 'He who Swims with Sharks', was printed in Germany by the Shark project.

I have introduced over 12,000 divers to shark and logged over 900 hours underwater with sharks and am recognised internationally as shark behavioural expert. I wrote a book about shark behaviour and the book remains unique as there is no equivalent.



From one of my shark courses I motivated one of my clients Gerhard Wegner, to start the Sharkproject with headquarters in Germany.

I was made a Honourary member and later the Sharkproject Ambassador to SA. I will continue to serve and support the Sharkproject to the end.

In 2005, I was invited to the Dusseldorf International Boat Show (BOOT). At the end of the first day I was invited to a press conference and named the '2005 Shark Guardian' - one year before Hans Hass was nominated - in recognition of all my efforts in shark conservation and getting Aliwal Shoal made into a MPA. [LEFT: ANDY BEING HANDED THE TROPHY]

The South Coast Marine Pipeline Forum. When Prof. Kadar Asmal became Minister of Department of Water Affairs (DWAF), he surrounded himself with a team of experts, including two scientists who had attended my Marine Environmental and Shark diving courses; they verified my 'qualifications as an expert of the Aliwal Shoal and I was elected to the team

My lobbying against marine pollution finally paid off as Prof. Kadar Asmal initiated the South Coast Marine Pipeline Forum (SCMPLF), which was well facilitated. Prof. Kadar Asmal answered all my mail, even when he had meetings in Pretoria with the KZN South Coast industries on effluent sea outfalls, I received the minutes within two weeks.

Trioxide's attitude to transparency was the break-through we needed as they had already instigated a five-year plan to reduce effluent impact by 50%. After a well facilitated meeting AOS came on board.

How change only came after the SAICCOR MD embarrassed SAPPI with comments about the SA Government in America, he subsequently was given early retirement. However, when the new SAICCOR MD Alan Tubb came on board with a commitment to transparency and subsequently mega bucks were spent on reducing impact.

The SCMPLF eventually resulted in the Permit Advisory Panel (PAP) where a transparent presentation was made possible, of outfall statistics. The Facilitation was very poor and the monthly PAP for me nearly died.

The Facilitator was changed to Rod Bullman with the birth of the quarterly Licence Approval Forum (LAF) for the scientific and transparent presentations at the SAICCOR LAF and the UIC LAF became unique.

Mid 2007. I was offered an all-paid trip to Vancouver BC to speak about sharks, after which I was awarded the "Whales Tail" in recognition of one man's passion influencing and changing so many people's opinion about sharks.

May 2007 - Request to Help Zulu land Community Development Projects. On behalf of a High Court Judge, I was asked to help his Tugela Ferry Community into Tourism. Bongani Ncobo was my translator and had to go to the Chiefs domains and go through the 'Byeti" protocol to invite the Chiefs to the Tugela Ferry Law Court, where I held the Indaba. Their request was to get a Lodge sited on the Tugela ferry and the Chiefs made two offers, one was to give land for a game park and the other offer was the table top of a mountain overlooking the Tugela River, as a camp site.



[LEFT: ANDY AND BONGANI NCOBO AT A TUGELA FERRY DANCE FESTIVAL.]

My presentations to the CEO of Ezemvelo Wildlife hit a brick wall and initially to TKZN Natal, failed due to a corrupt Tourism Development Manager, but when he killed himself in a car the new general manager got things moving again.

I also held an Indaba with the Nagel Dam Chief as he wanted to give all the land back and get the Lion Park reinstated and restocked with game; once again a brick wall from Ezemvelo Wildlife CEO.

My original objective in coming to S.A came into fruition when the Edendale Chief wanted to get into farming. I held the Indaba with Bongani Ncobo as my interpreter, with the Dept of Agriculture manager for the area and his extension officer and explained what the Dept. of Agriculture Manager could offer to get the community into Co-Op Farming. I also explained the assessment process and requirements. No Chief on any introduction was allowed to refer to me as ‘White’ but had to call me by my Kenya African name “Kifaru”.



In 2010, I visited Kenya and at Kanamae on the coast, I was inducted into a small Masai clan as ‘Kifaru’. [LEFT]

I did my best following my passion for KZN, the sustainability of the EEZ and Sharks and at great personal expense. In following my passion I made many friends and sadly many enemies, amongst them fishermen, spear fishermen and the new generation of scum bag divers who break two SA laws with no fear of enforced compliance. It has been tough on my family once my enemies associated them with me, and another blessing of moving to the Cape.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 Jane and I left KwaZulu-Natal and moved to Fish Hoek in the Western Cape, where our son

Chris and daughter Vanessa and their families reside. Vanessa and family now in Bahrain and daughter Bernadette and family in Queensland



**L/R: SON CHRIS (TOFF) AND WIFE ELVA**



**DAUGHTER BERNADETTE AND ANDY**

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Bill Cherry, former Nondies winger and club historian writes: One of the greats of East African rugby has passed away in South Africa. Tragically, killed by thugs, something no-one should endure in their twilight years. Andy's rugby pedigree in Kenya ranks as one of the best. He was a formidable Nondies opponent, playing for Kampala, Nakuru, Thika and Impala to name a few. In addition, he played for many East Africa representational, select and invitation teams, thus being a close team mate of many a Nondie. Upon retiring from the East Africa game, he was the second most capped East African Tusker, making the squads that toured England (1966), Ireland (1972) and Zambia (1975), and was also capped for Kenya three times. In recent years, he, like so many of

the Impala lads of the late 50s through early 70s, had been active in contributing and preserving the history of our game in East Africa. I, for one, shall miss his reminiscences of the game and his colourful stories of on and off the pitch antics.

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### THE POLICEMAN AND THE SETTLER – A KENYA STORY.

[Anthony Allen sKR3513]

I started collecting medals as a boy of about fourteen, way back in 1971. Dad [KR3513] had given me his WW2 war medal and Kenya AGS (Lieut. J B R Allen Kenya Regt) with the strict injunction that I was never to sell them in his lifetime. Shortly afterwards I was given the two medal groups of my paternal grandfather, Squadron Leader C.W. Allen RAF (614 Private, East African Mounted Rifles) and maternal grandfather, Captain John William Gordon Cleverly, 5 KAR (684 Private, East African Mounted Rifles [EAMR]).

Being Kenya-born, as was Dad, I decided to concentrate on medals awarded to men and women of the East African territories, i.e. Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar and Nyasaland. Over the years I have managed to accumulate a number of groups to important and well-known personalities from these countries.

My good friend William de Villiers (son of KR3199 A.T de Villiers) who started me on this lifetime interest, maintains that ‘medal collectors collect stories’; after all, a medal is a piece of metal (mostly with a ribbon), which, without the name of the recipient engraved on the rim might as well be a coin. Many medals are not accompanied by any paperwork but with dedicated research, aided these days with the internet, one can compile an accurate story of the recipient

So, I thought that SITREP readers may be interested in this article about two of my medal groups, and how their stories coincided for a small portion of time.

Grandfather Cecil William Allen was born in Snitterfield, Warwickshire in 1896, to William Richard (WR) Allen and Evarilda Rigbye, an Australian; they emigrated to Kenya in 1906. Cecil’s birth certificate mentions WR’s occupation as ‘gentleman’, so, assume they were financially comfortable. Cecil attended Harrow school and then Sandhurst whence he was commissioned into the 6<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards (The Carabineers).

Cecil moved to Kenya some time before the start of WWI, presumably assisting WR on the farm in Nakuru. On 26/09/1915 Cecil attested into the EAMR [614] with the exalted rank of Private!



Like many other Europeans in the East African theatre, Cecil eventually contracted malaria, and was discharged as ‘medically unfit’. His brief service qualified him for the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory medal, all named ‘614 PTE C W ALLEN E AFR M RIF’. He was also awarded the Silver War Badge [LEFT] introduced as an award of the ‘King’s Silver’ for loyal service to the Crown’s authority. The large sterling silver, numbered lapel badge, was presented to servicemen and women who had been honourably discharged, to wear on the right breast when in civilian clothes. A secondary causation for its introduction was to deter the ‘white feather brigade’; unfortunately, I don’t have his badge.

Meanwhile, our other medal recipient, Richard Frederick Rainsford was serving with the East African Police. Rainsford was born in 1888, in UK. The 1901 census has him living at St. Pancras with his mother and four siblings. There was a servant, so assume reasonably comfortable. Rainsford left the UK to serve in Africa and initially served in the Natal Police, later joining the British South Africa Police in Rhodesia from August 1907 to June 1908.

In 1906, the Natal Rebellion led by Zulu clan leader, Bambatha, broke out, when colonial authorities introduced a Poll Tax of £1, in addition to the existing Hut Tax to pressure Zulu men to enter the labour market. A number of Natal policemen sent to collect the outstanding taxes were murdered, and a native uprising resulted. This was an extensive uprising, with eventually more than 10,000 soldiers and police mobilised to bring matters under control. Here, Rainsford won his first medal, the Natal Rebellion medal with clasp "**1906**" as a Trooper with the Natal Police.

Rainsford moved up to British East Africa in 1908, and joined the East African Police, a force he was to serve with for nearly 30 years.

In 1915, the Turkana tribe were misbehaving, and up to their time-immemorial habits of raiding and murdering their neighbours, gun-running and ivory-poaching; the British administration decided that notwithstanding the demands of fighting the Germans, a punitive expedition was to be undertaken. Accordingly, a force of some 500 men was mobilised to impose fines in the form of cattle, and to recover ivory and firearms where possible. [Ed: *According to Wiki the unrest had to do with the imposition of Hut Taxes.*]

A force from the Sudan also participated in this expedition. Rainsford was awarded the Africa General Service medal with the clasp "**East Africa 1915**" and was mentioned in despatches in the London Gazette (1<sup>st</sup> May 1917) for "Valuable services during the operations against the Turkana, a tribe resident on the Northern Frontier of the East Africa and Uganda Protectorates, whose open hostility to government since the outbreak of war rendered a punitive expedition necessary".

He was also awarded the three first world war campaign medals with a Mention in Despatches for his WW1 service with 5 KAR (London Gazette 5<sup>th</sup> June 1919.). His service in WW1 seems to have been a combination of the East African Police Service Battalion and KAR, as the London Gazette of 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1919 announces he relinquished his commission in the KAR with effect from 14<sup>th</sup> April 1919.

Amongst the Allen family papers is a handwritten contract entered into in October 1921 by WR Allen with Gordetta and Haruama, two stone masons/builders then active in Nakuru, where WR and Eva had settled, for the construction of a house on farm 442/5. The contract sets out the size and dimensions of the farmhouse, the materials and finishes to be used and is signed by WR, and Gordetta has applied his right thumb print for and on behalf of himself and Haruama. This document has been countersigned by none other than Captain R.F. Rainsford, then the senior police officer at Nakuru. Interestingly, the contract is on the notepaper of the Rift Valley Sports Club, Nakuru, Kenya Colony.

Fast forward to November 1926, during which time Cecil had married Margaret Douglass, daughter of Captain Frank Douglass and Margaret Bowker (1925). Margaret was the daughter of Russel Bowker, one of the founders of EAMR, indeed, one Squadron had initially formed up behind Russel Bowker and called themselves 'Bowker's Horse'. Once all these eager recruits were amalgamated into the EAMR, the Bowker's Horse soldiers wore 'B H' on their helmets and/or epaulettes.



Cecil and Margaret had at that time one daughter, Margaret Athalie Baldwin Allen, my aunt Peggy, then six months old. Margaret was pregnant again with twin boys, John (my father) and Anthony. They were then living on the Nakuru farm during the great depression, and I do not think Cecil had (or was seeking) employment, but was farming maize and coffee. He had come into an inheritance at the age of 25, of some £20,000 pounds from his grandfather Richard William Allen - a large sum in those days.

The native compound on the neighbouring property which belonged to a Mr Milton was fairly near Cecil and Margaret's home. One Sunday night, an ngoma (dance) in the compound was creating a great deal of noise and two members of Cecil's household staff were despatched to request the cessation of the noise.

To this the partygoers responded that 'Cecil was not their boss, they were not on his farm and they would continue to revel while Bwana Milton was away on safari.' Cecil, incensed at this response, took his rifle and went down to the compound. As he approached the compound, he fired a shot which penetrated the 'hat' at the apex of the roof of one of the huts. The occupant, a Kikuyu named Muthoo emerged, very intoxicated and according to Cecil's testimony in his defence when on trial for Murder alternatively Culpable Homicide, 'went for him with a panga.' He pushed him back with a shove to the chest with the butt of the rifle, whereupon Muthoo raised the panga above his head and again went for Cecil. Cecil then 'aimed a blow at Muthoo's neck with the butt end of the rifle, the native ducked and the blow caught him on the side of the head.' Cecil left Muthoo lying on the ground where one of his wives resuscitated him by throwing water over him.

Quoting from the East African Standard of February 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 1927, which covered Cecil's three day trial:

'this, of course, created a good deal of astonishment amongst the natives, and the headman was summonsed to report this incident to Mrs. Milton who lived about a mile away. She saw the deceased (Muthoo) the next morning, and suggested he go to the police. The headman went to the station and sent a telegram. Mr Milton, who had been away at the time of the affair returned on the Tuesday and received a report from the headman.

'The next day, the deceased, with assistance, walked up to Mr Milton's house, and the latter advised him to go to the hospital on a wagon leaving that afternoon. The deceased refused to do so, and returned to his hut. The next day, the deceased, again with assistance walked up to see Mr Milton, who took him into Nakuru in his car. Neither Mr nor Mrs Milton realised the serious nature of the deceased's injuries. The deceased was admitted to Nakuru Hospital on the Friday afternoon, and died within two hours of admission. Mr Milton in the interval had reported the matter to the police.'

'A post mortem examination was held by Drs Henderson and Allen (No relation!) and the cause of death was laceration of the brain resulting from a fracture of the skull.

Witness Captain Rainsford, Superintendent of Police, Nakuru, identified the rifle in Court as that handed to him by the accused on November 28. Witness arrested the accused on that date.

Cecil was incarcerated in Nairobi prison and in accordance with the Indian Penal Code, bail was refused. I have a long, handwritten statement by Cecil on his treatment whilst in Nairobi prison, complaining of the poor treatment he had received starting with that meted out to him by the Superintendent at Nakuru "who knew me well as an old resident in the district." This included being measured, recording of marks on his body, his teeth etc, and the final indignity of having his fingerprints taken using an inkpad brought in by a native policeman! The statement calls for a public enquiry into the conditions (accommodation, food, punishment etc) in which European

prisoners awaiting trial exist at Nairobi Prison. Whether or not this report was ever published or followed up I do not know.

It certainly appears that 'bad blood' existed between Cecil and Rainsford and that Rainsford had relished arresting and imprisoning him. The officers at the Nairobi prison too appeared to have given Cecil a hard time - maybe his Harrow and Sandhurst accents antagonised them?...it could not have been an easy time for Cecil, for in those days the death penalty was a common sentence for murder.

The Standard covered three days of trial, too much to cover here, but a couple of extracts are, I feel worth repeating:

'The Chief Justice of East Africa was on the Bench, and the Crown was represented by Mr Gordon Smith (The Solicitor General) and Mr McCarthy. Mr E.K. Figgis, (King's Counsel) and Mr J.G. Kerr appeared for the defence.

'Mr Joseph Henry Milton said the deceased had been one of his squatters for nearly three years. He was an elderly native with a cantankerous disposition. He was not really insolent, but he gave that impression until one got to know him properly. He was more quarrelsome than most natives.

'A native woman living on Mr Milton's farm testified that the Deceased had nothing in his hands when he emerged from his hut. He did not own a panga, there was no pombe (drink) consumed on the night in question, nor had there been any on the premises during the day.'

Cross-examined, the witness denied that the villagers ever used pangas, all they owned were jembes (hoes) and small knives."

Many local farmers testified that Milton was unable to control his squatters and labour and that drunken ngomas were commonplace, with much noise and commotion.

Muthoo had been transported to Nakuru in the back of a pickup. He was partially conscious, and it was a bad road. It was agreed by the medical experts that the road and the trip could have caused haemorrhage which was ultimately the cause of death, and that had he been treated earlier after receiving the blow to the head, death might not have resulted.

'The native dressers at the hospital handled the injured man very roughly in getting him out of the car, much more roughly than a witness (Mr Milton) would have cared to handle a bag of maize.'

The accused was cross-examined by the Solicitor General.

'The Solicitor General: Have you had any Army service, Mr Allen? – Yes

And you have had experience of bayonet exercises? –Yes

Is it a fact that bayonet exercises are taught with a view to also using the butt of a rifle as a deadly weapon with the most telling effect? – Yes.

And I think the description of the blow given by you tallied with one of these exercises? – Roughly, yes, but I did not step forward with my right foot when I delivered the second blow.'

'The jury retired at 4.55 p.m. and re-entered a crowded court at 5.40 p.m. Amid a tense silence the Chief Justice asked: "Gentlemen, in considering your verdict, have you given the accused the benefit of any reasonable doubt?" The Foreman of the jury: "We have my Lord"

The Judge "What is your verdict?"

The Foreman of the jury: "On the first charge of murder, not guilty my Lord."

The Judge: “and on the second charge?”

The Foreman of the jury, “On the second charge of culpable homicide, not guilty my Lord”

The Judge: “And that is a unanimous verdict?”

The Foreman of the jury: “That is unanimous my Lord”.”

The Chief Justice addressing the accused said: “You are acquitted both on the charge of murder and on the charge of culpable homicide. You are discharged”.

Immediately the accused was surrounded by relatives and friends who congratulated him heartily on his release.”

This case received wide coverage across the empire, and debated in the House of Commons, as to whether this was British justice.

*‘House of Commons Debate 19 May 1927 vol 206 cc1362-31362 §55.*

Colonel WEDGWOOD asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Cecil William Allen, charged with murder or culpable homicide of a native at Nakuru, in Kenya, and acquitted by a European jury; whether he proposes to take any steps in the matter; and why, in accordance with the instructions given in the Duke of Devonshire's despatch in relation to such cases, a jury was not chosen from some distant area who might not be personally acquainted with the accused?

Mr. AMERY

I have received a full Report on the case. I do not feel called upon to question the verdict of the jury nor to take any steps in the matter. As regards the last part of the question, I am informed that the trial was held in Nairobi in order that the element of personal acquaintanceship with the accused should as far as possible be eliminated from the jury.

Colonel WEDGWOOD

Did the right hon. Gentleman read the Judge's summing-up, and did he approve of the line taken by the Judge on this question?

Mr. AMERY

The Chief Justice reported that there was no evidence of any racial bias exercised in favour of the accused, and that the verdict was satisfactory on that point.”



[ABOVE: COL RAINSFORD AND HIS MEDALS, COMPRISING THE IMPERIAL SERVICE ORDER, NATAL REBELLION MEDAL WITH CLASP “1906”, 1914-15 STAR, BRITISH WAR MEDAL 1914-20, VICTORY MEDAL, WITH MID, AFRICA GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL WITH CLASP “EAST AFRICA 1915” WITH MID, 1939-45 STAR, AFRICA STAR, BRITISH WAR MEDAL 1939-45 WITH MID.]

Rainsford continued his career with the East African Police, and was again recognised for exceptional service in the Mohammed Zubier punitive expedition to the NFD in 1925. He was rewarded with the Imperial Service Order (I.S.O.) in 1935 on retirement from the Kenya Police.

He was given an emergency commission into the African Colonial Force as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut with effect 3 September 1939 (London Gazette 8<sup>th</sup> June 1945). In the Army List of January 1946, he is shown as War Substantive Captain in August 1940 and T/ Major August 1940.

During WW2, Rainsford reached the rank of Acting Colonel, with the position of Deputy Provost Marshall for East Africa. He was again mentioned in Dispatches in the London Gazette of 30<sup>th</sup> December 1941.

Post war he died on his farm at Enderbess in 1947. He is buried in Kitale Cemetery.

I became aware of Rainsford's unique set of medals after a friend had given me a photocopy of the auction catalogue when sold in 1990 at Sotheby's. I was unaware of their sale at the time, and only in 2011 did I realise the family connection, although we had been told that Grandad had killed a man who attacked him with a panga.

Chasing up a Cape Town medal auctioneer some fifteen years ago (2006), when hearing that a sale was imminent, I asked him if there was anything in my area of interest. "Oh" he said "there is an ISO group to a Kenya Policeman". "Not Rainsford?" I exclaimed! "Yes, that's him, how did you know?" Turns out the set of medals had been owned by a collector in Cape Town, whose home I had visited and collection I had seen, but he had not showed me Rainsford's. I put in a bid and agonised until I heard that my bid had been successful!

In 2011, my aunt Peggy gave me many of the family papers, including the building contract, the newspaper coverage of Cecil's trial and Cecil's notes on his treatment by the Police and in Nairobi Prison. Apart from the fact that Rainsford's medal group represented nearly 40 years' service in Kenya, I was absolutely delighted to realise that I had the medals of the man who had charged my grandfather for murder and culpable homicide,

An important matter was to find photos of my medal recipients. For years I had searched for a photo of Rainsford, even visiting the Kenya Police headquarters in Nairobi alleging he was my mother's father - nothing. Searches on Ancestry found the census, and various mentions of him. The Kenya Police Association too had no photos (the Kenya Police museum burnt down in the 1930s). I was even trying to work out what school(s) he might have attended...

Then, in March 2020, whilst killing a few minutes in my lunch hour I googled Richard Frederick Rainsford and found a link to his family on Geni, a genealogical website. There was his father and mother, and wonder of wonders, a series of photos of him from childhood to a Captain in Nairobi in 1931, wearing five of his medals.

Following up with the poster of the pictures I contacted Dick Rainsford's great nephew, and shared with him photos of the medals, his story and his grave in Kitale. He then found another photo of Rainsford post WW2, on a round the world trip to Canada where his brother lived.

Cecil separated from his wife Margaret around 1930, I have some emotional letters from Margaret to her father-in-law W.R. Allen, telling him how badly treated she had been, was destitute and relying on the charity of others after Cecil had left her. Cecil was prospecting for gold at Kakamega. She was a passenger in a Ford lorry in Fort Portal, Uganda in 1931 driven by one S.W. Barratt. The lorry left a bridge and went into the river, apparently a native woman had run in front of the lorry,

Barratt swerved, and a bolt had sheared, losing steering. Barratt and my father John survived but Margaret and Anthony (after whom I am named) were drowned. They were buried in a common grave on Russel Bowker's farm on Mount Margaret. Bowker died in 1916, the family never claiming his WW1 medals - these I claimed as a direct descendent in 2018.



[ABOVE: SQN LDR C.W. ALLEN AND HIS MEDALS]

Cecil married again in the late 30s one Desiree (*Dizzy*) Bratt, who left him for a Colonel around 1944. He served as ADC to the Air Officer Commanding in East Africa during WW2, with the rank of Squadron Leader. He was present at the surrender ceremony of the Duke of Aosta in Addis Ababa, when according to family lore the Duke invited those present to take some souvenirs of the ceremony. Cecil took ten Italian hallmarked solid silver table ornaments in the form of animals which I have.

He married again after the War (1947) my Step-grandmother Doris (*Dodo*) Chapman, who was an Army Nurse in WW2 and perhaps the *kaliest* person I ever met. Cecil died in 1968 and *Dodo* in 1983. They are both buried in Malindi, I paid my respects to them in 2010 on a trip to Kenya.

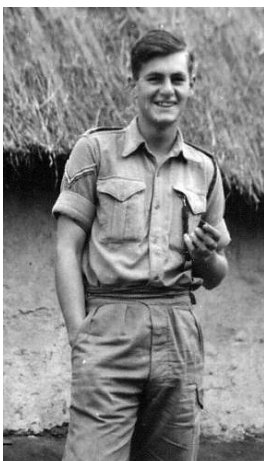
My medals live in a safe, with its many trays and I make sure that even after 90 odd years Dick Rainsford's and Cecil Allen's medals are kept far apart. I need them to be at peace.

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CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM BURN [KR4906]

[14<sup>th</sup> March 1937 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020]

[Extracted from the Memorial Sheet]



Chris was born in Haltwhistle, Northumberland (UK). After the Second World War, his doctor father relocated the family first to South Africa, and then to Kenya where he attended the Prince of Wales School in Nairobi.

He then completed his compulsory two-year military service with the Kenya Regiment [LEFT: L/CPL BURN].

After graduating from Moulton Agricultural College in Northampton (UK). he became a farmer in Kenya.



[LEFT]: On 9<sup>th</sup> January 1960, Chris and Bodil Madsen were married at 9<sup>th</sup> January 1960 at Sotik's St. Francis Church..

John was born in April 1961 and Dennis in December 1963.

When Kenya gained independence in 1964, the entire Burn family (including Chris's parents and sister) moved back to South Africa.

Chris and *Bodi* initially owned their own pineapple farm in East London for five years, after which Chris became a farm manager for various farmers in Natal, including his brother- and sister-in-law's Chip and Bessie Turner. In April 1979, Chris, *Bodi*, John and Dennis emigrated to Peterborough, Ontario where Chris was initially a farm manager and then a landscaper until his "retirement" in

his seventies.

Chris spent many years with the Peterborough Running Room crowd, where he was "Father Hen" to the "Mother Hens" and walked a marathon at age 70. When running became too difficult due to age and health issues, he took up walking often walking up to fifteen km a day, sometimes up and over Armour Hill in Peterborough! When not walking he enjoyed gardening, music (especially classical), literature, helping out neighbours with taking their garbage to the curb or snow removal, and helping *Bodi* around the house with cooking and cleaning. He enjoyed spending many hours on his laptop keeping up with Facebook "goings on" or researching new health initiatives and US politics. Chris had a fun-loving, sometimes whimsical view of life and the glass was always half full!



ABOVE: CELEBRATING MUM'S 80<sup>TH</sup> - MARCH 2020.

L/R: BACK ROW: ROBERT, CHRIS, YOUNGER SON DENNIS, OLDER SON JOHN  
SEATED: AMANDA; DEBBIE (MARRIED TO DENNIS); *BODI*; WENDY (MARRIED TO JOHN); CAROLINE AND CANDICE.

DENNIS AND DEBBIE ARE THE PARENTS OF ROBERT, AMANDA, CAROLINE AND CANDICE

SIR RICHARD EDMONDS LUYT GCMG, KCVO, KStJ, DCM

[submitted by Hugh Stott]



Sir Richard Luyt, Governor of British Guiana (1964 – 66) and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town (1968 – 80), died in Cape Town on February 12th, 1994 aged 78. He was born there on November 8th, 1915.

Richard Luyt came to the post of Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Cape Town in 1968 after a distinguished career in the British Overseas Colonial Service, crowned by his time as Governor of British Guiana during its transition to independence.

Thoughtful and quietly authoritative as Luyt's style tended to be, he found himself in conflict with the South African authorities during the 1970s, when he vigorously protested against the detention without trial of students and staff engaged in anti-apartheid activities. Well into his

sixties he could be found facing riot police at campus demonstrations.

Luyt's family on his father's side had lived in South Africa for over two centuries. Richard was born in Cape Town. After leaving the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, (Bishops) where he won a Rhodes Scholarship he went up to the University of Cape Town in 1933 to study economics and thence to Trinity College Oxford, in 1937.

There Luyt was recruited into the Civil Service, but when war broke out he tried to volunteer instead for the Army, thinking he would be more useful fighting. The War Office disagreed, and in July 1940 Luyt was sent out to Northern Rhodesia. It was at the discretion of the then Governor, Sir John Mabin, as to how his men should be used and, ironically, Mabin wanted Luyt in the armed forces.

Northern Rhodesia being part of East Africa Command, European recruits were enlisted into the Kenya Regiment for basic training and then attached to the King's African Rifles or other East African units. Luyt [KR1916] was posted as a Sergeant to a 600-strong Ethiopian guerrilla unit, part of Orde Wingate's Gideon Force 'patriots' who worked behind enemy lines. Wingate chose the 2nd Ethiopian Battalion with Luyt, now a Captain, at their head to lead the parade into Addis Ababa and restore the Emperor to his throne. It was with the 2nd Ethiopians that in April 1941, as a Sergeant, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, this medal being second only to the Victoria Cross for other ranks.

His citation ends "*In this action he displayed the greatest coolness and courage and undoubtedly he and his platoon inflicted more than 200 casualties upon the enemy. His escape with his life was almost miraculous, as he was under continuous heavy fire for some hours without adequate cover*".

Following the defeat of the Italian forces in Abyssinia in 1941, he spent the rest of the war training Ethiopian troops and putting down insurrections in the region. He was demobilised in 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1947, Luyt went back to Oxford where he briefly studied Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations in Africa. On his return to Northern Rhodesia he spent six years in the Copperbelt before being posted to Kenya in 1953 as Labour Commissioner, 1954-57, and then Permanent Secretary to various ministries until 1962.

He was sent later that year to Northern Rhodesia, where the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, formed with such high hopes, was breaking up. Once he accepted that its disintegration was inevitable, Luyt, as Chief Secretary in Northern Rhodesia, worked to push matters through to a speedy conclusion, and in 1964 saw Zambia become an independent republic within the Commonwealth.

Luyt was then posted out of Africa for the first time, when he was made Governor and Commander-in-Chief of British Guiana during the country's run-up to independence. He came to a potentially explosive situation. There followed four months of arson, rape and murder between the East Indians led by the colony's Marxist Prime Minister Dr Cheddi Jagan and the Africans led by Forbes Burnham. The violence culminated in the murder of a civil servant and seven of his children by a firebomb. The resulting emergency meeting of the Privy Council in London in June 1964 gave Luyt authority to suspend British Guiana's constitution and assume full emergency powers. He was forced to declare a State of Emergency. He handled the situation with tact, firmness and fairness. In February 1966, shortly before the country became independent, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip paid a royal visit to British Guiana at the start of their Caribbean tour. An Investiture was held in the ballroom of Government House at which the Queen invested Sir Richard with the KCVO.

Luyt left newly independent Guyana in 1966, after six months as its Governor General, claiming with typical phlegm that his time there had been happy. He took on his new post at the University of Cape Town in 1968 and remained in South Africa for the rest of his life. Outside his university duties he was a staunch supporter of the End Conscription Campaign, maintaining that it was wrong in the South African context to use an army of conscripts to enforce government policy. He also campaigned for the abolition of the death penalty.

Having won a rugby Blue and captained the Oxford cricket XI in 1940, Luyt, a small, solid man, remained an enthusiastic sportsman. He was in the staff University of Cape Town cricket team, president of the cricket club and patron of the rugby club. He kept up his old African friendships, such as with Emperor Haile Selassie and President Kaunda, in retirement and was invited to the Queen Mother's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party in 1980. He was knighted in 1964.

Luyt's first wife died in 1951. He was survived by his second wife Betty, a daughter and a son.

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#### INFORMATION ON EAST AFRICAN SUPPORTING ARMS & SERVICES IN WW2

[Hugh Stott KR6866]



I am running a project to record the formation and deployment of the combat support arms and logistical units that supported the East African divisions in the Abyssinian, Madagascar and Burma campaigns.

[L/R: BADGES OF EA ENGINEERS & EA ARMY SERVICE CORPS]





If any reader has family records or photographs which they would be prepared to scan, or cap badges, shoulder titles or medal groups which they can photograph and send me or Bruce Rookens-Smith, I would be very grateful. Due recognition would be given to the source of information. It is not intended to publish a book for sale but the papers, for the various units, would be placed in the archives with the papers of the King's African Rifles and East African Forces held in Bristol.

The background to the project is as follows:

The history of the King's African Rifles from its formation to the Independence of the constituent East African countries is well documented in books and in articles within the Regimental Journal of the King's African Rifles and East African Forces Association, 'Rhino Link', and within SITREP. The formation and attachments of the combat support arms and the service units is less well documented. There is no one document that incapsulates the formation and deployment of those units.

The two African Divisions formed at the start of the Second World War consisted of brigades from the Kings African Rifles and a brigade each from Nigeria and the Gold Coast. These two divisions were supported by East African Units formed with askaris freshly recruited from the tribes of East and Central Africa, trained askaris transferred from the King's African Rifles, attached personnel from the Kenya- and Rhodesia Regiment and seconded personnel from the British and Indian armies.

Whilst at the outbreak of war most units had been formed they were in an embryonic state. During the Abyssinian campaign they were largely mentored and supported by the South Africans who had arrived in Kenya in 1940.

In 1943 the decision to send East African troops to Burma required the newly formed 11th East African Division to be fully self-sufficient. The remarkable endurance and bravery of this Division in clearing the Kabaw Valley is not given the due recognition it deserves. It was noticeable in the VJ75 celebrations that the East Africans were rarely mentioned.



The units for which information is required are: East African Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Pioneers, Service Corps, Ordnance Corps, Medical Corps, Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, Pay Corps, Military Police, Intelligence and Nursing Corps.

[L/R: BADGES OF THE EA ELECTRICAL & MECHANICAL ENGINEERS & EA EDUCATION CORPS]



The sort of information I am looking for is where was the depot located, where did training take place, what sub-units were formed and who did they support; when did the unit return to East Africa and when was the unit disbanded?

If you can help please email me [hugh.stott2@gmail.com](mailto:hugh.stott2@gmail.com) or [rookenjb@mweb.co.za](mailto:rookenjb@mweb.co.za)

[Ed: *Hugh has agreed that his unit 'histories' can be included in SITREP at a later date, albeit in an abbreviated form.*]

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[Sydney Baillon]

[Ed: *Having heard that Sydney had during September 2019, visited Kenya after his last trip some 40 years ago, I asked him to submit his travelogue for inclusion in SITREP. But first, a bit about the author and his family:*

*“I was born in Eldoret but spent my youth in Nairobi where I attended Parklands Primary School and then on to the Prince of Wales School before leaving Kenya in early 1961 to pursue tertiary education in the UK. During my five years full-time study at Hammersmith College of Art & Building in London whence I graduated with Honours as an architect, I met a beautiful young art-student, Carole Wilson, from Huddersfield, Yorkshire, and towards the end of my final year we were married in the U.K. Shortly after I qualified, we decided to venture to South Africa where my parents and most of my siblings had settled having left Kenya during my study period. By the grace of God and a whole lot of tolerance by Carole, we are still very happily married to this day, 55 years, three children and seven grandchildren later.*

*I am still actively involved in my own practice in South Africa albeit under a lot of pressure from Carole and the family to retire. This boring Covid imposed lock-down that we have been made to endure of late, is fast persuading me that I am not mentally ready for retirement just yet! In the 55 years practising, mainly in my own practices, I have had the pleasure and good fortune of designing and having my buildings erected on three continents, which I look upon as some kind of personal record, for not many architects can lay claim to that spread of achievement, not bad for a Kenya-born and schooled lad!*

*Some readers may remember my elder brother Leon Baillon [KR4027] who was married to Topsy Mercier, sister of Stiffy Mercier [KR4211], and my brother-in-law Joe Marais [KR4297] who was married to my elder sister, Muriel. Unlike Leon and Joe, sadly both now deceased as are Muriel and Topsy, I did not serve in the Kenya Regiment but was in the CCF whilst at Prince of Wales School (1956-1960).*

*After leaving Kenya, Leon and Joe and their families spent the rest of their lives in South Africa, during which time they founded and jointly owned three extremely successful transport companies based in Pietermaritzburg. Joe took early retirement but Leon continued to run his transport business and diesel engine repair company virtually up to the day he died in August 2013, at the age of 80. Leon had remained an avid East African Safari fan throughout his life, keeping in touch with his past Safari friends and also many of his old School (St Mary’s) and Kenya Regiment friends right up to his or their ends. Some of the names of Leon’s life-long friends that I recall were Jack Hlawaty [KR3768], the Fjastad brothers Hugo [KR4042] and Tom [KR4481], Chris McBreaty [KR4023], Tony Bartollo [KR3608], Peter Hughes [KR4488], Ossie McPhee [KR4217], Geof Rehm [KR479] and many others, the list would be endless.*

*Coming from a large family (nine children) of moderate means, the Kenya that I was accustomed to and had grown-up in was very much family-orientated and did not include the frequenting or being involved in Kenya’s high-life, social environment, club way of life of that time.*

*It was nevertheless, a life full of fun, enjoyment, adventure, camaraderie, excitement and yes, a few very deep sorrows at times. With that in mind our trip was organised around trying to keep away from the typical ‘high-life’, ‘touristy’, ‘club’ type attractions which I am sure still exists in Kenya to this day.]*

Carole and I booked a three week trip to Kenya, the purpose of the trip was not to visit game venues, sunbathe on beaches or seeking gastronomic and alcoholic experiences but was for me to attempt to revisit, as many as possible, the places that had been such a large part of my early life growing up in Nairobi and surrounds and the Kenya Coastal Region, so our short stay was confined to these two areas.

I approached our trip with a totally open-mind and fully anticipating that doubt many things would no doubt have changed during the past 40 years. I will thus attempt to be as impartially objective as can be in recounting our trip.

This trip was our third, having holidayed there previously with our children in 1974 & 1980, but this time we were on our own. At my age of 77 (not allowed to mention Carole's) our concerned children thought we were very intrepid venturing to Kenya un-chaperoned by them and with resistance, very little forward planning/booking by us - Kenya-style!. I kept reminding them that their grandfather, an orphan from the age of five, had arrived in Kenya in 1919 at the age of nineteen, recently out of school and not knowing a soul in Kenya; that is what I considered to be, intrepid!

We arrived at JK International airport mid-afternoon after a pleasant five hour SAA flight from Johannesburg. Nairobi airport was quiet with no-one really directing us as to what to do. By observing a long counter full of people filling in forms we deduced that we too had to do the same and so we filled both available forms just in case.

We then joined a long queue only to be told that as a South African citizen I did not require a visa but Carole who was travelling on a British passport, did!

Contrary to what the Kenya Embassy in Pretoria had advised me, Kenya immigration would not accept any of our cash-cards and stated that we had to get US\$50 from a nearby ATM. Unfortunately, the ATM printout indicated that it had 'run out of dollars', so we had to take local currency which the immigration officer declined to accept. We then had to go to a *Bureau de Change*, change our newly acquired Kenya money into US dollars, and Carole was finally issued with a 30-day visa.

We collected our luggage without a hitch and found our prearranged hotel driver awaiting us. However, we had a long walk to his vehicle and the driver subsequently took the next 20 minutes or so finding a parking pay-machine that worked! We then set off into the Nairobi rush hour traffic and arrived at our hotel, the Fairview Hotel, which had been recommended by Kenyan friends.

The immediate impression on the way to the hotel was one of how things have changed as the airport was now no longer 'out in the sticks' and all but in the immediate outskirts of Nairobi City. The driver took much delight in showing us how close the Nairobi Game reserve was now to the City. The dual carriageway was chock-a-block with traffic going in both directions. Approaching the city-centre we observed that the trees in the centre of the highway islands and some abutting buildings were festooned with morbid (undertaker) looking marabou storks which looked very foreboding and ominously unwelcoming. The driver stated that the birds were now concentrated in large numbers due to the proximity of the Nairobi main Municipal refuse dump.

Apart from some of the taller buildings of the past which I could recognise in the distance, not much else remained the same that I could immediately recollect and certainly not least being the intense traffic congestion encountered throughout the trip to our hotel on the new-roads layouts.

We arrived at the Fairview Hotel which turned out to be a delightful old-Kenya style hotel set in beautifully maintained gardens, quite like a tranquil oasis in the midst of Nairobi's chaos, certainly, a sensible and enjoyable choice. The hotel was clean and well run but very sparsely occupied; our room was well equipped and spacious. It has several dining facilities within, the main one served a breakfast buffet which left one totally satisfied with its available variety and quantities on offer. It was always a huge pleasure to return to the tranquillity of the Fairview after a tiring day of sightseeing and with no need to run the gauntlet of having to further leave the hotel for an evening meal and drink at one or other of their in-house dining facilities.

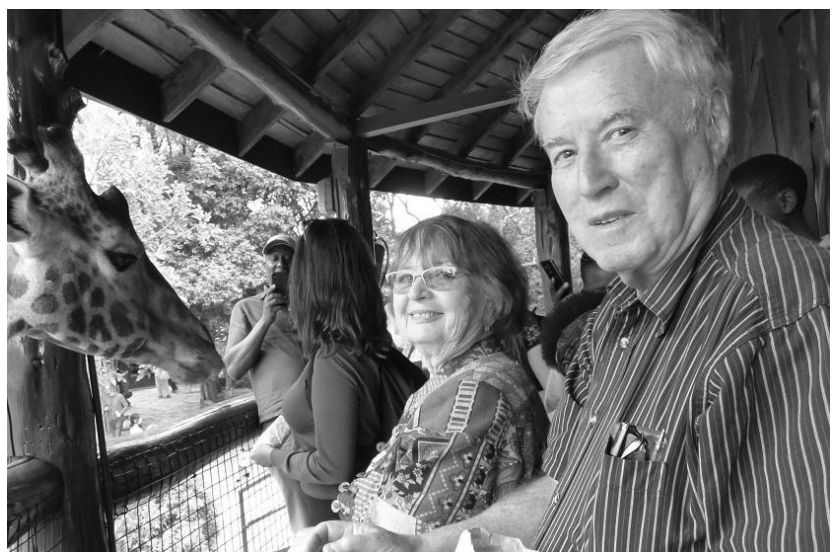
Using the Fairview Hotel [BELOW] as our base, we had pre-organised through an acquaintance in Nairobi to hire a vehicle and driver for the duration of our Nairobi stay. We had been well advised to do just that as, in reality, there is no way whatsoever would we have been able to drive ourselves around Nairobi and surrounds, such are the on-going road changes and the horrific traffic congestions, not to mention cops-on-the-take! I subsequently surmised that without our very capable and obliging driver, Paul, we would have not ventured overmuch outside of the sanctuary and serenity of the Fairview.



The following six days were taken up being ably driven around Nairobi and outlying areas at our wish and leisure by a very pleasant, patient and knowledgeable Paul. (Contact me should anyone require details on how to contact Paul).

If ever visiting Kenya, take everyone's advice and do not even attempt to self-drive. You will return home in a small urn for sure if you do! The roads throughout Kenya from what I observed are absolutely chaotic in every possible respect imaginable. I think Carole spent 50% of our time touring around Kenya with her eyes shut, not breathing and tightly clutching an imaginary St. Christopher medallion!

By way of breaking us in, Day 1 was spent visiting the usual tourist spots, with a visit to the Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage (OK, but could do with some better crowd-management interventions), The Giraffe Centre, (very pleasant and enjoyable experience in a nicely designed facility) [RIGHT: CAROLE & SYDNEY WITH INQUISITIVE GIRAFFE], and the Karen Blixen Museum (an enjoyable and atmospheric experience enhanced by one's preconceptions of the place after having viewed the film 'Out of Africa' scores of times



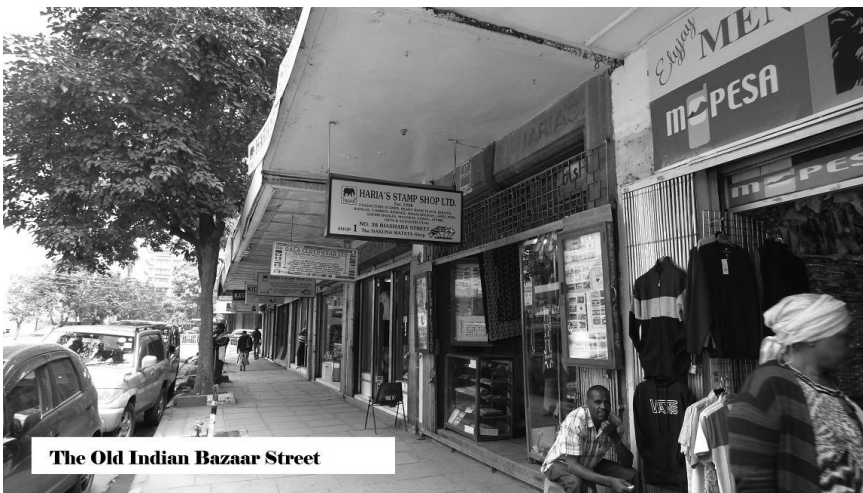
beforehand and as I continue to do so fairly frequently – I love the music from the film!). The actual



museum house itself was interesting but the curator should be ashamed at the shoddy way they exhibit the outdoor farming remnants that form part of the museum complex attraction. [LEFT]

Day 2 being a Saturday, we toured downtown Nairobi observing the vast changes in layout, buildings, landscaping, traffic and crowd flows. General impressions were much as I had expected with many changes, new as well as unrecognizable

old road layouts, poor pavements, angle-parking, half-attempts (but commendable nevertheless) at preserving landscaping, billboards everywhere, some of the recognisable old buildings still in use but not particularly well maintained, large numbers of people sitting around seemingly doing nothing, several beggars, one man demonstrating drones that he was selling off the pavement of all things, and some shady Indian-looking guys approaching travellers to purchase/flog foreign exchange for reasons unknown.



**The Old Indian Bazaar Street**

Conclusion - another fairly soul-less, crowded city much like many others anywhere in the World and which one would need considerably more time than what we gave it to grow back into its atmosphere which presumably remains hidden there somewhere. Would I want to visit Nairobi City again? Not really.

were the old Indian Bazaar area and the Jevanjee Gardens as these had remained in my childhood memories of being a long street of vibrant shops selling spices, fabrics, cotton threads, fireworks and of course delicious curries and samoosas from the Gardens Hotel on the other side to the Jevanjee Gardens.

In many ways the old shops remain as I could remember them but in no way as bustling and buzzing as existed in my memory, the Indian traders of old being not so evident now.

The Jevanjee Gardens, the only park in the city owned by the people was now only a distant semblance of what it once was [RIGHT STATUE OF J.M. JEVANGEE]



The gardens seemed to be a resting place for the homeless and inebriated and to cap my disappointment the Gardens Hotel is no longer, having been replaced by a nondescript multi-storey building of no architectural merit or historical significance. Not a samoosa outlet in sight let alone a waiter delivering them to your car!



All that's left of the then imposing statue of Queen Victoria is its pedestal [LEFT]. [Ed: *The statue, presented to the Town of Nairobi by business man A.M. Jevanjee, and unveiled by HRH The Duke of Connaught on 11th March 1906, was beheaded by vandals in 2015 and thrown into the nearby bushes.*]

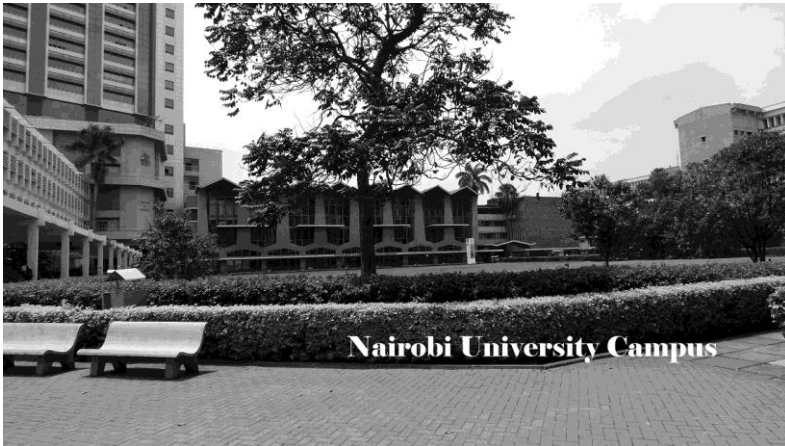
Whilst walking around the area I was hounded by a harmless old Indian gentleman who was persistent in telling me that he worked for the University and that he was collecting funds for wheelchairs for the poor, old and disabled. A very noble cause I assured him and I did my best to encourage him to go and chat instead to all the locals occupying the garden's benches and shady spots.

We also visited the large weekly crafters market which was situated on the Law Courts parking area; a vibrant, extremely colourful, large market with hordes of crafters pleading with the few tourists to buy their products. The crafters' many and varied highly skilled talents were on display but the experience and enjoyment of looking at them was spoilt by the people hounding us to buy their wares, to the point that we felt extremely intimidated and overwhelmed with only one wish, to get the hell out of there, which we did with a number of crafters still following us all the way back to our car pleading with us to buy something. Not a pleasant experience at all!

Following the craft market 'scare' I wanted to visit the old railway station as it had been so much part of my childhood, my Dad having been on the construction side of the railway dating back to the 1930s era. Leaving our driver to drive in circles with Carole sitting in the back seat trying to recover from the trauma of the crafters' assaults, I ventured towards the building with my camera (albeit knowing that photo taking of it was not allowed) in the hope that I could charm the numerous askaris guarding it into letting me take just one photo by using my antique-knowledge of Swahili. I recounted to them my reasons for wanting just one nostalgic photo. I thought I had succeeded when one of the askaris took me aside implying that there was a better position from which to view the building. When he had me away from his colleagues, he started lecturing me on how it was illegal to take photos of state-owned buildings but if I was to 'buy him a large lunch' he would permit me to do so. I responded by telling him that 'seeing that he had isolated me from his pals so that they could not hear him asking me for a bribe, they similarly could not hear me telling him to 'bugger-off', which I then did, minus taking any photographs.

We then proceeded to the nearby 'railway museum'. To pre-empt the intimidating situation again, when I asked the man at the entrance gate, if I would be permitted to take some photos of the exhibits, he mumbled that if 'I spoke nicely to the lady at the ticket office she would probably let me do so'. I uttered my second bugger-off in quick successions that morning and left without visiting

the museum. I have never bribed anyone in my entire life and would certainly not want to do so by way of dirtying the memories of the many great pioneers, my father included, who had built the railway in the first place for this current crop of corrupt officials to feed off. In fairness to the Museum, I have subsequently been informed by several people that they do permit taking of photos of the exhibits and that my informers had not been approached for bribes to do that. To my chagrin, I guess my temper of the moment, therefore deprived me of the pleasure of viewing the museum.



In complete contrast, we then drove off to view the Nairobi University campus where my Dad had been a clerk of works for the PWD on some of its earlier buildings, and which I used to visit with him on site as a toto, thus spawning my interest into becoming an architect after leaving the POW.

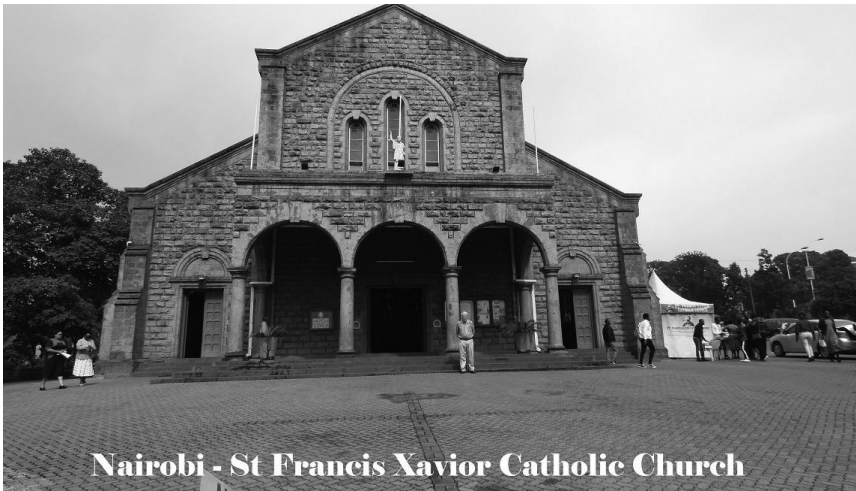
In passing, since practising as an architect, the main direction of my career has been in the designing of educational buildings, so I guess it's a case of what goes around comes around!

Being the weekend, the campus was securely closed. Undaunted, I approached the guard from outside the gate to see if I would be permitted to enter the campus. After some minutes of debate through the gate, the guard told me that I would need to seek permission from his superior before he could let me onto the campus and I was requested to follow him to the guard-office. Following my earlier experiences, I thought to myself, here we go again, here comes my third 'bugger-off' of the day.

How entirely wrong I was. The middle-age gentleman, introduced as being the man in charge of security, could not have been more polite and charming and he became totally interested and intrigued in my tale about my ties with the early construction days of the campus. We had a very pleasant long chat about my recollections of being on site with my Dad and also about how I used to ride along the outside road, past the Norfolk Hotel, to tie my bicycle up at the nearby Kingsway Police Station, (still located there but in newer buildings) so that I could attend the Saturday morning film in the old Empire Cinema.

The Chief of Security then duly instructed his man to permit our driver and Carole onto the campus, in his words 'to park comfortably in the shade' and then for the guard to accompany me around the campus with his permission to take as many photos as I wished. Walking around the campus, I was pleasantly surprised to notice that 'Dad's buildings' were still standing and well maintained, as were the gardens on the Campus. Well done to the University of Nairobi and thank you to the Security Chief and his able man for their much-appreciated courtesy and time afforded to me.

The Sunday was reserved for two very personal reasons that I wanted to accomplish without fail whilst on this trip. One of them was to attend another Sunday mass at what had been my family parish church, St Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Parklands. What a poignant visit that was for me, remembering my beloved parents and eight siblings, sadly all now departed, attending services altogether as a family at masses, christenings, catechism lessons, First Holy Communions, confirmations, lent, Easter, Christmas, weddings and funerals over many years in this sacred building, including that of my eldest brother Sgt. Joe Baillon.



The church itself was very much as I could remember it albeit much built-in around its site and with its landscaping sadly predominantly replaced with open paved parking expanses. I introduced myself to the incumbent Parish Priest (Father Albert) who was interested in my story of old and appreciative of my visit.

On the lighter side to this story, on checking at our hotel

regarding the service times, I was told that there were to be two Sunday services during the morning, an early one and the other at 10am, the one we opted to attend. What we were not told however was that the 10am mass was a high-mass conducted entirely in Swahili! The service was jam-packed and with Carole and I feeling very much as gate-crashers at what sounded like a pop-concert with our fellow worshippers singing, stamping and clapping their way through the rowdy, and very lengthy service, all accompanied by guitars and bongo-drums.

On reflection I thought that it was probably retribution brought upon me by my Mum from above for having permitted myself to become a lapsed-catholic against what I am sure would have been her wishes; she always wanted me to become a priest and was seriously disappointed when she discovered that, like most POW boys, I had developed a penchant for the 'heifers' (school girls) from The Boma (Kenya Girls High School) at a very early age in my path to adulthood!

After the visit, our driver Paul announced that he too was a Roman Catholic and that it was the first time in his life that he had actually been paid to attend mass! Seriously though, this visit to St Francis Xavier was altogether moving, memorable, sad, enjoyable and entertaining and a never to be forgotten experience.

The second reason was to proceed to the City Park Cemetery to view the graves of my eldest and youngest brothers who died two years apart, and in particular to affix to my oldest brother's headstone a laminated-copy of the Elizabeth Cross citation scroll that accompanied his medals which had been awarded in his memory a few years back by the War Office of the UK, and which I had prepared and brought with me for that purpose from S.A.

As many of you may know, my brother, Sergeant Joe Baillon of the Kenya Regiment, died of wounds at the age of 21 on 14 April 1953, following a skirmish against the Mau Mau. Sadly, three of his fellow combatants also lost their lives, two of whom, Michael Dowey [KR4137] and John Bianchi [KR3968] are buried alongside Joe in the cemetery. [Ed: *The third casualty, Michael Cantounias [KR4125] was interred in the Greek cemetery. Readers are referred to the article about 'Priory Ridge' in mini-SITREP XXXI – pp45-57, with comments by Sydney.*]

Finding the cemetery proved to be a scary mission passing shanty-type developments along a badly deteriorated road and having to ask some locals for directions. Eventually I recognised the old, now roofless, cemetery entrance portico and deduced that we had indeed arrived at our destination. With a certain element of anxiety for our safety, I and with a rather reluctant Carole and Paul following me, commenced to locate my brothers' grave, the exact location of which I was conversant with as we had visited it so often way-back in time.

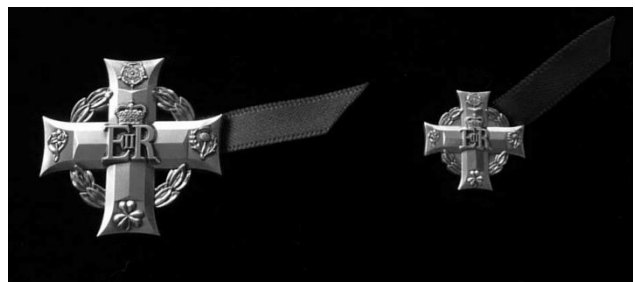
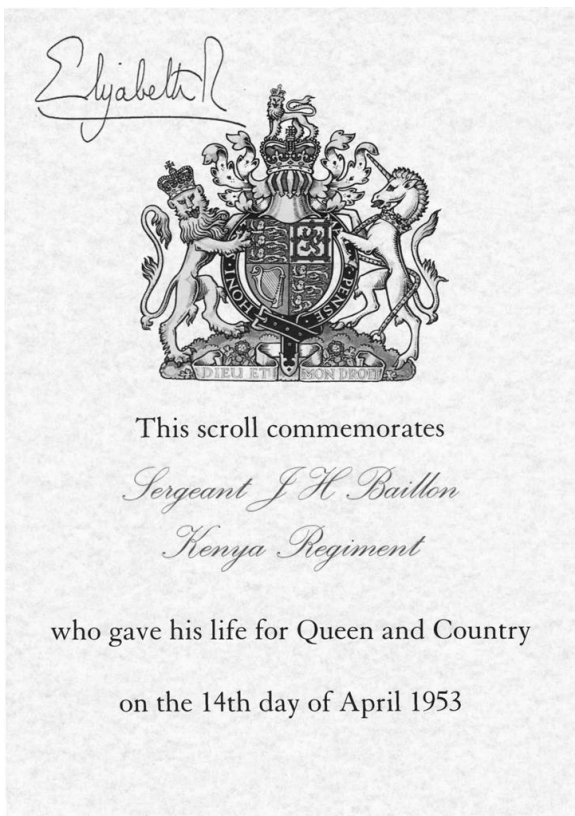




Sadly, I was unable to find my younger brother's gravestone amongst the many vandalised and/or removed headstones but I soon located the three graves of the three Kenya Regiment fallen

The graves were in a pitiful state in spite of having been renovated some years ago by Monty Brown [KR3902] and members of the Friends of

Nairobi South Cemetery. [Ed: See *mini-SITREP XXXVIII pp 71.*] Their condition looked even worse following the overnight rain, making everything look very forlorn and sad. Notwithstanding, the graves thankfully remained recognisable. I made my reunification in spirit with my brother and his two colleagues, affixed with pride to Joe's headstone his citation scroll as intended and we departed the cemetery with heavy hearts. [ABOVE: L/R: GRAVES OF PTE MICHAEL BIANCI, PTE JOHN DOWEY AND SGT JOE BAILLON, WITH SYDNEY AND JOE'S ELIZABETH CROSS SCROLL.]



[Ed: Copy of Joe Baillon's scroll and the Elizabeth Cross and miniature issued to Next of Kin.]

In the remaining days around Nairobi we also visited, the Nairobi School (Prince of Wales School



in my days.) [RIGHT] – which made me sad as it had a bit of a run-down feel about it. There was a new double-storey classroom block under construction on the site which, as an architect, left me somewhat disheartened at the evident lack of quality and suspect construction standards being perpetuated in its erection.

Miraculously one of the old-time prefab classrooms block in which I had been taught some sixty years ago were still in existence and seemingly still being used, albeit with some floor- and wall boards missing here and there.



St Mary's School [LEFT] which my brother Leon had attended, looked well maintained and I discovered their small beautifully kept cemetery [BELOW] which contained many graves of priests and nuns who presumably had taught or had been associated with the school and/or Kenya at some time, and also some graves of the Hughes family, including that of the young Zelda Hughes who I could recall was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident at about the same time that I was

attending P.O.W.



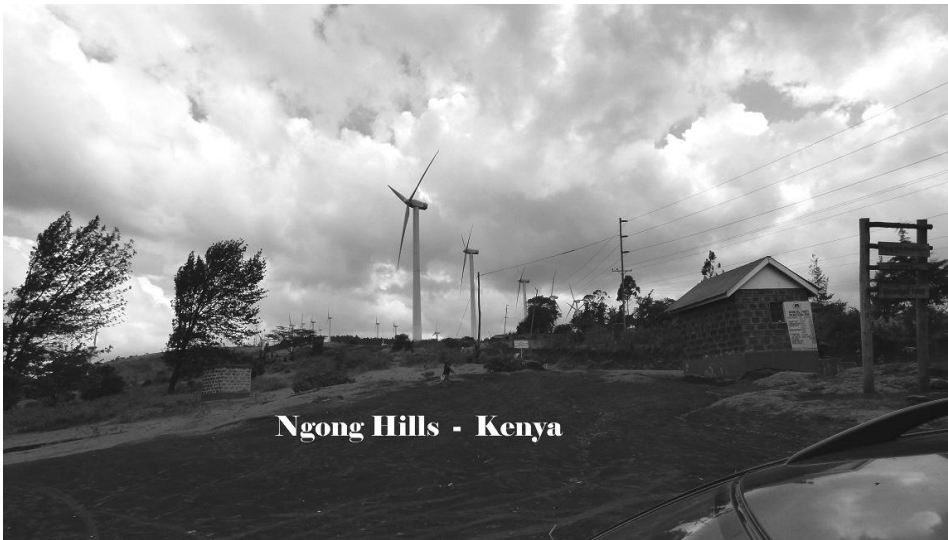
*[Ed: Readers will, I am sure, understand why I have included this photograph.]*

We also visited:

Westlands Mall - when you've seen one mall you have seen them all, good standard but light years away from the Sclaters & Whittaker Provisions Store at Westlands of my young days.

The Karen Provisions Store to try some of their recommended samoosas - just ok, but their curried potato slices were absolutely delicious, the like of which I had never tasted but am now hooked on them.

The site of my old home on Sclaters Road, now sadly no longer, having been replaced by a large office block behind a high security wall and gates, beyond which we were not permitted to enter.



**Ngong Hills - Kenya**

[LEFT]. The foothills of the now wind-tower-festooned Ngong Hills - science-fiction, in the midst of poverty, so sad.

We drove through Kabera settlement, a very depressing and sobering experience, leaving one emotionally shattered and extremely despondent for the

futures of its unfortunate inhabitants. How they must be coping with the Covid-virus epidemic of the moment, I just cannot imagine.



**NAIROBI - Agricultural Show Ground**

We visited the 'Royal Show Grounds' [Ed: *now the Agricultural Society of Kenya Showground*] - apart from the main arena which was being used for a well-attended church out-door gathering at the time, it looked generally derelict throughout, but I was assured does get used for shows as days of old.



**Nairobi Race Course**

We also drove around the Nairobi Horse Racing Club [LEFT] which looked reasonably well maintained with some fine-looking horses in the stables.

I was led to believe that race-going is still popular in Nairobi amongst people of all races.

Probably one of the greatest environmental-changes shocks

I had on this trip was during the two- day trips we undertook to visit Thika and Nakuru. Basically, traffic and pedestrian chaos the entire journeys, with hordes of humanity trying to eke a living out of each other on either side of the roads festooned with a myriad of shanty homes, street vendors and businesses in the midst of some newly constructed developments, many of which looked abandoned halfway during their construction.

There seemed to be no reasoning and certainly no planning thought processes behind any of what we observed; totally unplanned ribbon-development on either side of major arterial and obviously heavily used road-links. Again, my heart became heavy for the unfortunate mass of humanity who has to endure this hectic and meagre existence and living conditions.

On the Nakuru trip, the once famous 'Escarpment' view was only possible between shanty dukas selling the same curios, vegetables etc available in thousands of other stalls that we had seen elsewhere in an around Nairobi and all with similar desperate vendors trying to impart their wares. The view of the Escarpment was shrouded with a heavy haze which the locals tried to persuade me was fog but looked more smog/pollution to me.

The famed Italian prisoner-of-war chapel [BELOW – LEFT] was all but hidden behind a high wall with only small portions of it visible from the road. There was a near-by presumed 'pay-booth' looking building with several hangers-on loitering outside, all of which made it totally uninviting to even bother to get out of one's vehicle and risk crossing the road to view it, especially when there is an all but identical, beautifully maintained similar Italian prisoner-of-war one, in Pietermaritzburg [BELOW – RIGHT] which is near to our home and which we can regularly view.



Add to this the horrific overtaking on the bends by all vehicles large and small. The day before our trip a family of six plus driver had been killed on the same road in a head-on crash, an event which I had not mentioned to Carole as, for sure, she would have refused to accompany me on this loop of our visit! We passed at least two heavy duty lorries on their sides in ditches.

Mt Longonot however, when nearer it to able to view it through the smog, looked as beautifully imposing as ever and brought back some positive memories. Lake Naivasha remained attractive but I could not get an idea as to how enjoyable it would be to frequent its shores on day-outings from Nairobi as was the case back in my days, and more especially if one had to check if one's will was current every time one embarked on a visit via the above described lethal obstacle-course road. Nakuru was basically unrecognizable from my days and there was not much to be seen to remember it in the future.

To return to Nairobi along the 'new road' was slightly less hair-raising but very much the same with informal settlements and stalls/markets on either side interspersed with some pine forests and a tea plantation which I could still recall.

One constant was the roadside cattle and goats feeding everywhere, over-seen by blanket-clad persons with long sticks in-hand. At one point on our return, at an intersection on the outskirts of Nairobi, we were delayed in the heat and solid traffic for at least 45 minutes due to some Chinese contract road-works which did not appear to be undertaken with any sense of great urgency whatsoever, despite the chaotic traffic back-log it was creating.

At this point I need to compliment Kenyans over their remarkable patience and cool-temper keeping capabilities whilst enduring the hours and hours of traffic hold-ups, at least throughout all the areas where we travelled, that they do as part of their daily lives. The Shakespearian quotation learnt at the Prince of Wales, about 'sitting like patience on a monument' kept going through my mind! At a guess I would surmise that at least 75% of Kenya's national fuel-consumption is used up by stationary vehicles stuck in traffic hold-ups with their engines running and air conditioners on full blast!

Another observation in both urban and rural areas, was the large number of fenced-off but empty and barren small plots with 'For Sale With Clean Title Deeds' on hand-scribbled boards which boggled my mind about the legalities and realities of purchasing such remote and strangely situated and seemingly un-serviced small plots?

Whilst in Nairobi we also drove through the still 'posh' residential suburbs of Karen and Langata where the more fortunate obviously live; these areas looked as tidy and cared for as per old days albeit most of the houses are now obscured from view by high security walls and electrified security fencing. Sadly, very similar to many of South Africa's urban scenes!

We were entertained for a delightful and enjoyable lunch by Jill Flowers and her Mum in their home in Langata which conjured many happy Kenya-style domestic-life memories for me.

After six nights in Nairobi and the Fairview Hotel, we opted (by way of me reliving the train journey) to travel to Mombasa on the new Chinese-built and owned, Expressway train. We had pre-booked our tickets thanks to the good advice and help from Jill. Passenger trains run (one up and one down per day) without any stops between Mombasa Terminus in Miritini and Nairobi Terminus in Syokimau, near the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Freight services are provided between Port Reitz, just west of Mombasa Island, and the inland container depot in the Embakasi division of Nairobi. [BELOW L/R: SYOKIMAU PLATFORM AND FIRST CLASS COMPARTMENT.]



The train journey between Nairobi and Mombasa is now reduced from fifteen hours to four hours and 30 minutes! The construction of the line involved long viaducts, deep cuttings and high embankments to ensure safe operations across the steep inclines and rugged terrain. With 120km of the line traversing through Kenya's Tsavo National Park, fourteen channels were also constructed to allow free movement of wildlife. The train travels at approximately 120kph for the entire trip. The down trip in a very clean first-class coach was on the whole easy, smooth and comfortable with refreshment trollies frequently going up and down the aisles, with drinks, including beers, and snack items for sale. Bottled water and some dry biscuits were handed out free.

Being a daylight journey, one was able to view the passing scenery which again was vastly different from that of the old steam-train era, in so far as very few 'wild-animals' were observed (only five Zebra and of all things about 50 camels in all!). Thousands of ever-munching goats were however very prevalent! We were very seldom able to view the countryside free of any human settlements or interventions throughout the entire journey. In places, the old Colonial era railway line and a number of the old stations were still visible, as was the new Nairobi Mombasa truck-congested, road running alongside the new line here and there. The journey ended after dark so that great, early morning memory of approaching Mombasa and being able to view the sea was sadly not re-lived. The new train journey ends in Miritini, from which one needs to venture forth to one's final Mombasa destination by road transport.

The terminals at either end were clean, spacious, pleasant and comfortable with clean restaurants selling a variety of food and beverages.

Stepping out of from the confines of the Miritini terminal one is immediately almost assaulted by marauding touts working for taxis-drivers seeking passengers. Following advice from Kenyans, we pre-negotiated a price before accepting a taxi – the going rate was at about 60% lower than that which was initially expected but still higher than what I had been informed by locals. [Ed: *An article about the new rail system was included in SITREP LIV – pp70-72*]



Wanting to be fairly close to the centre, we had pre-booked to stay at the Nyali Beach Hotel, [ABOVE] which we had very much enjoyed 40 years or so earlier. According to <TripAdviser & Booking.Com> it had still looked interesting and promised a good standard. Being dark, I could not recognise any landmarks on the way to the Hotel more especially because it appeared that just about every street was either undergoing severe road works or had deteriorated to some high extent.

Our arrival at Nyali Beach Hotel was late so after a quick bite to eat we hastened to our room, not being up to looking around the hotel. Next morning, we were anxious to take in our surroundings and of course 'to see the sea'. In essence, the old hotel buildings and beaches had not changed much from what we could remember, though now looking a bit jaded and requiring some TLC in places. The lawns, gardens and beach-edge were well kept. What was very quickly noticeable was that, like the Fairview had been in Nairobi, there were very few guests in the hotel resulting in it being extremely quiet with almost more staff than guests. How they were surviving as a going business

was the burning question that I kept asking myself. The staff on the whole and in particular the Dining/Catering Manager (a newly appointed Indian gentleman recently arrived from India) and the Head Chef (a South African), could not have been more obliging and made us feel very welcome throughout our stay.

Generally, the rest of the hotel was OK but lacked most of the old ‘vibes’. There were areas which were being renovated and rooms being upgraded (highly needed, especially the bathrooms; ours was certainly not of the expected standard). Notwithstanding, as we were basically only looking for a base from which to tour the Mombasa area, it suited our initial purpose. After three nights however, we moved to the nearby Tamarind Lodges which we found much better suited to our taste.

The best thing about staying at the Nyali Beach Hotel was when I showed the staff my collection of photos (on my iPad) taken some 40 years earlier in the hotel of Carole and I and our very young daughters in the pool and on the beach etc. They were in total awe and very touched that we had made the effort to re-visit the hotel after all those years. We felt so sorry for them that the circumstances of low tourism in Kenya generally, combined with the depressing feel of their hotel were not working in their favour in spite of their good intentions and very pleasant personalities. How they and the Hotel are faring under the current Covid-Virus shutdowns leaves one highly concerned for their wellbeing and job-potentials.

The Tamarind (Self-Catering) Lodges [BELOW] look out onto Mombasa old-town from across the creek and we thoroughly enjoyed our following eight nights there. Indeed, if ever we were to return to Mombasa that’s where we would want to stay. The sunsets looking across the creek onto Mombasa old town, with the mosques prayer-chants wafting across the water, was so historically atmospheric and relaxing. Our serviced unit was clean and comfortably appointed with all the mod-cons.



Abutting the complex was the famed Tamarind sea-food restaurant (average seafood and nothing comparable to Cape Town equivalents at  $\pm$  same cost) but convenient for us to use. The pools at the Lodges under shady palm trees were beautifully clean and inviting in the heat. I made great use of the pools but every time I was the only guest using them. Carole inferred that my presence in the pool would have scared others off! As with the Fairview in Nairobi and Nyali Beach Hotel, the Lodges were also virtually devoid of guests; all quite worrying for the sustainable viability of

Kenya's tourist industry. When we visited Kenya back in 1980 there were a great many German tourists in the coastal hotels; this time their absence was very apparent.



[ABOVE: THE ALUMINIUM TUSKS, COMMISSIONED IN COMMEMORATION OF A VISIT TO MOMBASA BY QUEEN ELIZABETH IN 1952.]

Using the Nyali Beach Hotel and the Tamarind Lodges as our base and again hiring a vehicle and driver for the full days, we toured around Mombasa town and visited the North and South coast regions.

Mombasa town had not developed as much as Nairobi and a fair amount of its old charm remained. Many of the old buildings still stood and generally were in fair condition and still recognisable.

Seemingly they have a new Governor/Mayor who is insisting that everyone paints their buildings and keeps them in good condition. He does however insist that the buildings must be painted in white and blue colours so Mombasa is gaining a somewhat monochromatic look about it. As expected the streets are more traffic congested but nowhere as chaotic as the Nairobi roads. TukTuk transport, extensively used by the locals, is very much in evidence and appears to be well controlled and maintained. The 'Arabic' influence that had always characterised Mombasa's architecture and environment thankfully remained very much in evidence. The high humid heat and abundance of palm trees were still all as remembered.

We visited the old Mombasa Hospital where I had spent four days during my youth suffering from Malaria, and was amazed that the fantastic sea view from its ward veranda still existed. Much to my delight I found that the old hospital building had been well preserved and had in fact been declared a 'National Monument'. I met the Director of the Hospital who was kind enough to give us a conducted tour of the hospital which had been extensively added to since my days. The hospital is now run as a 'non-profit making private hospital' according to the Director, who proudly boasted about their new maternity wing and natal facilities. It was indeed an enjoyable and enlightening visit and very encouraging to meet the dedicated and caring hospital management and staff. Sadly, some weeks after our visit, I learnt that the Hospital had suffered a devastating fire which had desecrated a fair portion of its buildings. It is my fervent hope that they will manage to reinstate their facilities in due course.



We also visited the lighthouse road - completely changed and now not as 'picnic-friendly' as it was in my days, and Fort Jesus [LEFT], where after being immediately accosted by a bunch of would-be 'tour guides' outside even before getting near the entrance, we decided to give it a miss as we had toured it last time around and still had the photos taken from the Tamarind.



We set off early one morning to take a day trip to Malindi, detouring to view Kikambala where, in my youth, we used to always spend our coastal holidays. Kikambala had changed out of all recognition, the Whispering Palms Hotel now reduced to a ruin. There were some new hotels, one of which we visited but again found it entirely devoid of any guests and the staff also having that brave-faced but dejected look about their lack-of-tourists reality. The dining room was fully set out for a couple of hundred people and at about 10 a.m., we saw about three people at a table and they looked like hotel managers having a cup of coffee!

We walked along the beach for a short distance to remind myself of the hours of fun, fishing and snorkelling which my siblings and I had enjoyed. The tide was out and there was a few people walking to/from the distant reef. There were no signs of the lengthy fish-traps that were frequently laid from the beach outwards into the sea.



Also, on the way to Kikambala, the old Matwapa ferry had been replaced by a new bridge across the creek; quicker but nowhere as exciting as the old, man-powered ferry crossings. [Ed: *Photo from the 50s*]

The road to Malindi was in good condition, long and straight with quite a lot of traffic travelling in both directions. Virtually the whole way there were dukas/stalls of one sort or other on both sides of the roads much as we had observed in the Nairobi outings.

There were some new buildings along the way and some open spaces still visible in parts. Sisal farming is still evident (seemingly their sisal is exported to China where part of it is used for fertilizer) and thankfully numerous of the famous coastal baobab trees were still there, some of which are really magnificent.



Just as we arrived in Malindi there was a monumental flash-storm and within minutes the roads in and around the town were axle-deep in fast flowing 'rivers' of muddy water desperately trying to find non-existent drains and channels into which to discharge. Road-side shops were hastily being rescued and

everyone was attempting to find a dry spot to park/stand. Carole really thought that the deluge was upon us and our end was nigh. [ABOVE: AFTER THE THUNDERSTORM]

However, as quickly as it occurred, it suddenly stopped and very shortly the flood waters had dispersed obviously into the porous coastal sandy soil, and life resorted to normal. We walked around the older part of Malindi but by that time it was 'prayer-time' and as most of the dukas were closed we drove to the Driftwood Hotel (now the Driftwood Beach Club) [BELOW] for a very welcome light-lunch. I ordered samoosas and a White Cap beer only to be told by the waiter, after a while, that 'they did not have any samoosas on the menu'. Thankfully the owner/manager lady who was talking to us at the time, sharply sent the waiter off back with a 'flea-in-his-ear' to the kitchen to 'tell the chef to find some samoosas'! Six delicious, very large samoosas duly arrived a short-while later which were all washed down by my second bottle of *baridi* White Cap.



The Driftwood seemingly was also short of guests, with only two other couples observed at the bar/dining area although it was lunch-time. The beach looked totally deserted but as beautiful as ever as did the tall palm-trees around the hotel grounds.

After the lunch, feeling somewhat fortified, we drove around the Malindi area sight-seeing and then headed directly back to Mombasa hoping to avoid the heavy rush hour traffic. It was great arriving back at the Tamarind lodges to once again enjoy the tranquillity and our sundowners looking across the creek.

On another day-trip we ventured down the South Coast to visit the Diani area, and of course we had to face the Likoni Ferry crossing which was quite a mission. On the Mombasa side we had a lengthy wait as both pedestrian- and vehicle- traffic was heavy. It was obvious that there were similar holdups on the other side. Whilst waiting, we were approached by a bald-headed automatic-rifle touting Rambo-looking and acting type cop, who after a few words of greeting proceeded to inform me that our taxi did not have the correct windscreen disc.

I politely informed him that it was none of my business and that he should direct his angry comments to our driver instead. He then demanded our driver to step out of the vehicle and they jointly went to the rear of the vehicle. A couple of minutes later the driver returned and told us that the cop wanted Ksh 600 to let us proceed, implying that the money should be forthcoming from me. Carole and I started to get out of the taxi with me telling the cop and driver that 'we would walk from here and find an alternative taxi and that they can both get lost'.

Miraculously, our driver subsequently found Ksh600 in notes from under his dashboard which he handed to the cop and we were permitted to board the ferry. That was the last we heard of the incident and it was not repeated again on our return journey as we had feared.



After the hot and over-crowded ferry-crossing we proceeded down along the South Coast Road. As with the Malindi North Coast road, the South Coast road was similarly lined on both sides for most of the way by dukas selling this and that to the passing trade and locals.

[LEFT: 'KONTAMA RADIATOR WORKERS' – ONE OF THE MANY DUKAS LINING THE ROAD TO DIANI]

The population numbers observed were equally as high and impoverished looking. On the whole the entire journey down to Diani Beach was repetitive of what we had seen in and around Mombasa and the North Coast route.

The Diani area itself had grown quite a bit since our last trip with a few modern looking suburban-type shopping centres scattered around.

We visited Diani Beach Hotel [BELOW] which, yet again as with other hotels we had visited, there were few guests/tourists. But for hotel staff, the lounges and bars were all but deserted as were the



beach and swimming pool areas.

By the time we had covered the Nairobi and Mombasa areas we had pretty much completed our intended Kenya reminiscing quest, so took a couple of days relaxing and really enjoying the rest of our stay at the Tamarind Lodges prior to our return flight to South Africa.



Almost as a final farewell to Kenya, both on our Nairobi-Mombasa and Nairobi-Joburg flights we were treated to magnificent sightings of the majestic (but no snow-capped) Mount Kilimanjaro, towering up into the clear blue sky, the sight of which one never tires.

It brought to an end our enjoyable and interesting visit to Kenya where my old memories had been rekindled, relived and/or shattered to various extents.

The question needs to be asked, would I ever want to return again? Honestly? The answer would have to be NO, but maybe YES, if only to be amongst the lovely people of Kenya, (other than the embezzling-cops and guards) who we were privileged to have met during this trip and who we now hold out our best wishes and prayers that their circumstances will one day improve for their sakes and that of Kenya.

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ANDREW DOUGLAS ROSS-MUNRO [KR7130]

[25<sup>th</sup> April 1941 – 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020]

[wife Ann (née Grisewood)]

Andy Ross-Munro was born in Nairobi, Kenya to Ilma and John Ross-Munro (working for Caltex Oil); Andy was the eldest child and has a younger brother Gordon and sister Karil.

He went to a country junior school as a boarder from the age of seven which he thoroughly enjoyed. The school offered horse riding, horse jumping and a good academic grounding. Andy then attended the Duke of York School as a boarder but was forced, much to his dismay, to become a day-scholar, once the school discovered he lived nearby. He enjoyed competing in rugby, squash, tennis, athletics and swimming.

We met in Kenya during his early high school years and started dating in our teens. After school he completed his six-month compulsory service with the Kenya Regiment which he absolutely loved, although he did go AWOL a couple of weekends. He was not caught luckily, but as and when he arrived home unexpectedly, his father was NOT impressed and told him so!

In 1961, Andy started his studies at the Cape Town University (UCT), a five year course of intense study in Quantity Surveying (QS), with breaks for bridge, chess and squash. He lived in a boarding house in Rondebosch, where he met John Patten, who remained a close friend for over 50 years. He partied on Friday and Saturday nights but went to bed early on Sunday nights. He always finished studying for exams two weeks beforehand and then lent his notes to a friend who was cramming for his exams at the last minute. During his course he worked for a QS firm. Andy was one of the first

to buy a surfboard with a metal skeg and spent many weekends surfing at Muizenberg and Kommetjie in the early 1960s.

In May of Andy's final year, we were married, and after a couple of years our first child, Sarah was born. We travelled to the UK where Andy had been offered a QS position, during which time we contemplated whether to live in the UK, Canada or Australia, but after a year, he was offered a QS post in Cape Town, so we decided to return as we loved Cape Town and travelling with a toddler was difficult, Andy also took up a post as Senior Lecturer at UCT. Later he started his own business with two other partners and continued lecturing at UCT.

After seven years and two more children (Jane and John), Andy chose to do his year studying at Reading university in the UK where he received his Masters Degree. On returning to Cape Town, Andy became involved in local politics and was later appointed Mayor of Constantia. When he retired, he was bestowed with the title of Alderman.

A keen golfer, Andy joined the Royal Cape Golf Club in the early 1960s. Later he became a NOMADS golfer and looked forward to the monthly game. In 1984, he became the Captain for Western Province Nomads. We often travelled to the National golf games around South Africa. Later Andy enjoyed playing as a senior member. Meeting and playing with old friends was enlivening, even if his golf that day was not!

Reading autobiographies, historical and adventure stories was another passion. Andy was a wonderful father and guided his children well, albeit with a quick temper and loud voice. But he was unwavering in his support and encouragement and he loved them dearly. We loved travelling and enjoyed many holidays within South Africa. As well as visiting our son, John and his wife Lucy and their children in London and on the Isle of Man.



[ABOVE: ANNE AND ANDY]

Andy lived his life to the full, right up to his final years, when he developed pulmonary hypertension which curtailed his activities somewhat. He tolerated it bravely without complaint. He will be sadly missed and remembered for his strong, honest, straightforward opinions.

He was respected and much loved by all of us.

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### MAJOR JOHN BLOWER

[22<sup>nd</sup> August 1922 to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020]



[Telegraph/Times]

*Sapper in Burma with the West African troops who helped the 14th Army to defeat the Japanese*

Major John Blower, who has died aged 97, was a Sapper officer who saw active service in Burma and later became a game warden and a pioneer of wildlife conservation in Africa and the Far East.

In 1942 Blower [LEFT] was commissioned into the Royal Engineers. He underwent rigorous training in West Africa in jungle warfare before joining, in Burma, the 81st (West Africa) Division, comprising 90,000 African soldiers, all volunteers skilled in fighting in rough terrain.

In a foreword to John Hamilton's book 'War Bush', the Duke of Edinburgh paid tribute to these men: "The Division was unique in the story of the British Empire. It was the largest concentration of our African troops ever and it played a very significant part in the victory of the 14th Army over the Japanese in Burma".

On one occasion, with orders to 'spread alarm and confusion', Blower led a patrol of four handpicked soldiers into the Kaladan Valley deep behind enemy lines. Marching through dense jungle they were challenged by a large tiger, but fortunately the animal turned away.

They ambushed a working party close to where the Japanese were encamped in strength and discovered that they had stirred up a real "hornets' nest". They withdrew without wasting any time and had to use all the fieldcraft for which African soldiers were renowned to shake off their pursuers.

A month after they set out, having covered several hundred miles of broken country, they returned to base unscathed. Blower was Mentioned in Dispatches.

John Henry Blower was born on August 25 1922 near Shrewsbury and educated at Rossall School where he joined the cadet force. He began reading Forestry at Edinburgh University, but his studies were cut short when he enlisted in the Army.

After the war, he commanded 36 Field Company in Nigeria. He subsequently retired from the Army in the rank of major and completed his degree. In 1949 he moved to Tanganyika, where his first post was assistant conservator of forests, responsible for 30,000 square miles of territory which would become the Serengeti and Ngorongoro National Parks.

In 1954 he volunteered for a temporary secondment to the Kenya Police Reserve, forming a group of 26 African tribal police that became known as 'Blowforce'. On anti-terrorist operations in the Aberdares, they inflicted heavy casualties on Mau Mau fighters and killed their leader, the notorious General Kago.

Blower moved on to the Uganda Game Department as chief game warden. Extremely fit and a fast walker, he enjoyed exploring by making safaris on foot. In 1958 he oversaw the founding of the Kidepo Valley National Park.



In 1965 he became an adviser to the Ethiopian government on the planning and establishment of national parks. Three years later, he was part of a 70-strong Anglo-Ethiopian Blue Nile Expedition. Formed by the Royal Military College of Science at the invitation of Emperor Haile Selassie and headed by Colonel John Blashford-Snell, it took part in the first descent and exploration of the upper reaches of the famous river. [LEFT: BLOWER WITH A GUIDE IN ETHIOPIA]

Blower, in charge of surveying wildlife along the route, led a party on foot across 150 miles of unmapped country to join the main body of the expedition. It was a hazardous venture and he was twice attacked by hostile tribesmen.

He had many adventures in Africa. On one occasion, in Uganda, he was transporting a crocodile in a dugout in a canoe when the animal started thrashing about and they were in danger of capsizing. Reluctantly, he had to shoot it - but the bullet holed the canoe, which promptly sank. On another, on the Uganda border with the Congo, he was charged by a large silverback gorilla. He managed to elude it, but it was not prepared to return without a trophy and made off with his hat on its head.

In 1970, he joined the forestry department of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN. During his fourteen years' service with the FAO, he worked on the creation of national parks in Nepal and, later, as a consultant in Indonesia and Bhutan.



An accomplished marksman and a talented photographer, he was also a prolific writer. His publications included Banagi Hill- A Game Warden's Africa (2004), In Ethiopia (2006), Himalayan Assignment (2006) and The Plundered Forests (2007) [LEFT].

In retirement near Hay-on-Wye, he and his wife planted many thousands of trees and created a beautiful garden.

A modest man, who had a great knowledge of the natural world and enjoyed talking about others' achievements, he needed a great deal of persuasion before he would recount his own adventures.

John Blower married Elizabeth Lutley in 1955. They divorced in 1975 and she died in 2012. He married, secondly, Wendy Day, an American anthropologist and botanist. She also predeceased him and he is survived by two sons and two daughters of his first marriage and by three stepchildren.

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Ian Ross <ekapalon@btinternet.com> 03/11/2020: I first met John shortly before I joined Uganda National Parks. He had retired from the Uganda Game Department and was managing Uganda Wildlife Development, the parastatal hunting firm set up by him post Uganda independence. Under UN auspices, he went on to establish, successively, national parks in Ethiopia, Nepal and Indonesia. Modest in the extreme, and therefore relatively unknown, he was an international wildlife conservationist extraordinaire. He eventually retired to the Welsh borders where I stayed with him frequently. Sadly, I was unable to attend his funeral, but I remain in touch with one of his daughters, Roseanne Hollowell.

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EDWARD CHARLES GOSS [KR6261]

[01/05/1936 - 17<sup>th</sup> June 2002]

[Imre Loeffler]



[Ed: *Readers may well ask why I am including an 18 year-old obituary. Well, Bryan Edmundson [KR7165] recently dropped in for coffee and mentioned that in the mid-60s when he was Specialist Tea Officer (Meru and Nyambanes) and Rastus Bond [KR7231] was District Agricultural Officer (Meru), they regularly met up with a Park's warden and former Regimental member, one Ted Goss, and spoke very highly of him; then there was the article in Old Africa Issue 89. Intrigued, I checked the Internet and came across Imre's article.*]

Imre Loeffler remembers the achievements of one of conservation's most accomplished warden pilots.

People always referred to him as Ted Goss, never just as Ted or Mr Goss. He was undeniably one of the linchpins of wildlife conservation in East Africa in the post-colonial era, one of only a small group of men with vision - that telling blend of imagination, patience, courage and insight with which to cope with rapidly changing circumstances in the region. Such people had to do battle as much with corruption in high places as they have with poachers on the ground.

Perhaps the best memorial to Ted Goss's life and work is the Mwaluganje Elephant sanctuary on the slopes of the Shimba Hills, near Mombasa. As Kenya's first community-based game reserve, this was the product of dogged determination on his part. Central to it was the understanding that for conservation to succeed it must be practised as an integral part of development, cognisant of the welfare of local people who must ultimately benefit from it.

Ted Goss, who died on 17 June 2002 in Nyali, Mombasa, aged 66, was the driving force behind this Sanctuary. Edward Charles Goss was born in Mbeya, in Tanganyika's southern Highlands on 1st May 1936.

At primary school there he learned to speak proper Kiswahili, unlike many of his peers, who could speak only 'kitchen Swahili. In 1949, he moved to Nairobi to attend the Prince of Wales (now Nairobi) School.

Ted Goss's first real job was - by his own admission - the establishment of the Meru Game Reserve (now Meru National Park) on a shoestring budget. At the time, he was just 26, but full of energy



and self confidence and had plenty of ideas. Kenya, meanwhile, had just become independent. And so began a period of service to the republic that would go on to span fully 40 years.

During this period, Ted Goss was the first game warden to learn to fly small aircraft. Initially, he bought his own light aircraft, a Piper Cruiser, but he had to swap this for a Peugeot 404 to meet the financial demands of his expanding family.

It was in Meru that he nearly lost his life while trying his hand at darting an elephant for the first time. When the elephant began to stagger, he seized it by the tail, whereupon it quickly came to and gave chase. Ted Goss fell over and soon found himself under the elephant's belly. The infuriated elephant raked the young warden out with its foot, before standing on his femur, crushing it to smithereens. He then dragged himself away, enabling a game scout to shoot the elephant without fear of the beast collapsing on him.

This miraculous escape was followed by a long period of intensive care in Nairobi Hospital, where his life hung in the balance. As soon as he could walk again, Ted Goss joined the Kenya National Parks as assistant warden for Mountain Parks under the tutorship of the already legendary Bill Woodley MC [KR3997]. In this capacity, he was able to learn from a man who knew the secrets of the Aberdares as well as the best of the Kikuyu.

His next posting took him to Tsavo, where his tutor was yet another of Kenya's legends, David Sheldrick [KR415]. He then started the first marine parks in Kenya at Malindi and Watamu with the assistance of well known local, Lalli Diddum.

On turning 30 he was appointed Warden of Tsavo West National Park, where he remained for nine years, doing much to give that vast but then little developed park the face it has today, with such features as the observation tank at the Mzima Springs, and the road network opening up the southern section.

The notorious 'ivory wars' in Tsavo intensified during the 1970s and Ted Goss risked his life almost daily fighting the poaching gangs. He was able to raise sufficient funding in America to obtain his helicopter licence and to acquire a chopper, which was essential to the success of the operations against the militarised poachers. He subsequently became one of Kenya's best bush chopper pilots, logging more than 4,000 helicopter hours. He used his great skills in the air not only to track down and rout poachers, but also - increasingly - in masterful translocation operations aimed at preserving big game, rhinos especially.

In the course of one of his daring chopper sorties, he became involved in an accident. When reporting this back to his benefactors he was asked if he was sure it was not the poachers who had shot him down, causing the helicopter to crash.

With the insurance money, a larger and more powerful helicopter was purchased and donated to Ted Goss as a replacement for the one the 'poachers' had shot down. In Nairobi, around the Aero Club bar the gossip turned at once to admiration for a man 'who by crashing his chopper gets an instant upgrade'.

The Aero Club was one of his most cherished watering holes, and Ted Goss could on some days be prevailed upon there to relate one or other of his many dramatic, often hilarious game-cum-flying stories.

Ted Goss's new career in government service culminated in his appointment in 1978 as the head of the newly formed Anti-poaching Unit.

He and a crack force of 400 rangers fought increasingly gruesome battles against the Somali poaching 'shifita' throughout Kenya.



[ABOVE. TED AND SOME RANGERS]

From 1988, onwards Ted Goss was the executive officer of the Eden Wildlife Trust, which had been set up by a London couple, the Edens, to support his work in Tsavo.

With the Eden's backing, Ted Goss became involved in numerous conservation activities, ranging from the Rhino Rescue Programme to the Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary.

He went on working, to the very last, showing determination and enthusiasm even when his health began to fail.

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#### EXCERPTS FROM ALTA NAUDE'S TRAVELOGUE

[Ed: *Alta was born in Eldoret and her travelogue first appeared in the Friends of East Africa 2019 magazine 'Habari'. Her father, Jacob Carel (Koppie) Eksteen, a farmer in the Sergoit area, enlisted into the Kenya Regiment [KR879] in 1940, was commissioned in 1941 and saw service with 2/3KAR during WWII. Alta first attended the Hill School (Eldoret), before completing her education in Pretoria, where she met her husband-to-be, Bill Naude.*]

I can clearly recall the day of the departure from the farm at Sergoit, the drive down the avenue of trees. My siblings and I were on our way to Embakasi airport in Nairobi to fly to South Africa for the start of the school year. I had been to high school in Pretoria for a few years. So my stays on the farm became mere visits twice a year. This coupled with the knowledge that my parents were contemplating leaving Kenya must have made me start distancing myself from the farm and Kenya in general. Small wonder then that leaving the farm ostensibly did not make that much of an impression. And yet over the many years of my absence from the place of my birth I often mulled over those few years I spent there in relation to the many years living elsewhere, and somehow in my mind, my life in Kenya and the departure became unfinished business for me.

My husband Bill and I have always loved travel, driving on rural roads and camping, both locally and in our neighbouring countries. Some years ago we ventured further afield into Angola, as far north as Luanda with a group of South Africans, keen on finding evidence of the SA military

involvement, as well as the Dorsland Trekkers [Ed: *The collective name of a series of explorations undertaken by Boer settlers towards the end of the 19th century to find political independence and better living conditions*].

This trip made us realise that there is so much to explore further north in Africa, also that we are essentially solo travellers; and then of course in the back of my mind always, Sergoit, Eldoret, Kenya ....

So, in April 2018, our Landrover 130 converted into a camper, was turned north to the Tropic of Capricorn to eventually venture farther north beyond the Equator. We started the journey at Cape Agulhas not that far from our home town of George as we wanted to start at the most southerly point in Africa, and because my paternal grandfather Johannes Frederik Hendrik Eksteen was born at nearby Bredasdorp on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1884. In the nineteen thirties, he found his way to the farm at Sergoit in Kenya.



Our journey took us to the Oranjemund border crossing into Namibia, and from Katima Mulilo in the Caprivi, up the western side of Zambia, across the south to Malawi and the road north alongside Lake Malawi, and then into Tanzania. We spent a few days in Zanzibar having caught the ferry from Dar es Salaam. In both Malawi and Tanzania, we found some remains of an Afrikaner presence in days gone by, the impressive Nkhoma Mission station, east of Lilongwe in Malawi, founded by the Dutch Reformed Mission church as well as the beautifully preserved Dutch Reformed Church in Arusha, Tanzania [LEFT].

I remember this church because my parents were friendly with the Dominee, Ds PAM Brink in the late fifties and early sixties, and I attended a service before being taken by car to get a view of Kilimanjaro, after which we spent a few days in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro.

It was great to see that the lovely Cape Dutch building was well preserved and now being used by the Seventh Day Adventist church. The commemoration plaque [RIGHT] is still mounted on the wall and is evidence of the fact that the church was built 'to the Glory of God in 1953'. It was sad to note that at one stage there was an Afrikaner community in Arusha as in other parts of East and Central Africa, substantial enough to warrant the building of an expensive church and manse.



Then northward to Kenya. After some time in Nairobi and the Nanyuki area, we ventured down the escarpment to Naivasha, Nakuru and Lake Baringo. After a few very enjoyable days we

were off to find Sergoit. We set off, taking a cross country route through spectacular passes, all part of the Great Rift Valley.

I had not been in these parts for so long that I really couldn't remember how beautiful Kenya is in places. What was very pleasing to see is that the countryside is still afforested in parts with indigenous trees and cultivated plantations. Once we had reached the top of the last hill I knew that navigation was up to me, as neither the GPS nor the map was that reliable.



I was looking for a large hill called Sergoit and sure enough there it was, we turned off on the dirt road to Moiben and there was a sign, 'Chepkoilel Secondary School'.

[LEFT: ALTA AND SOME OF THE PUPILS]

My family had long ago established that our farmhouse was now being used as a school.

So Bill asked whether I wanted to go there straight away and of course I did. After some

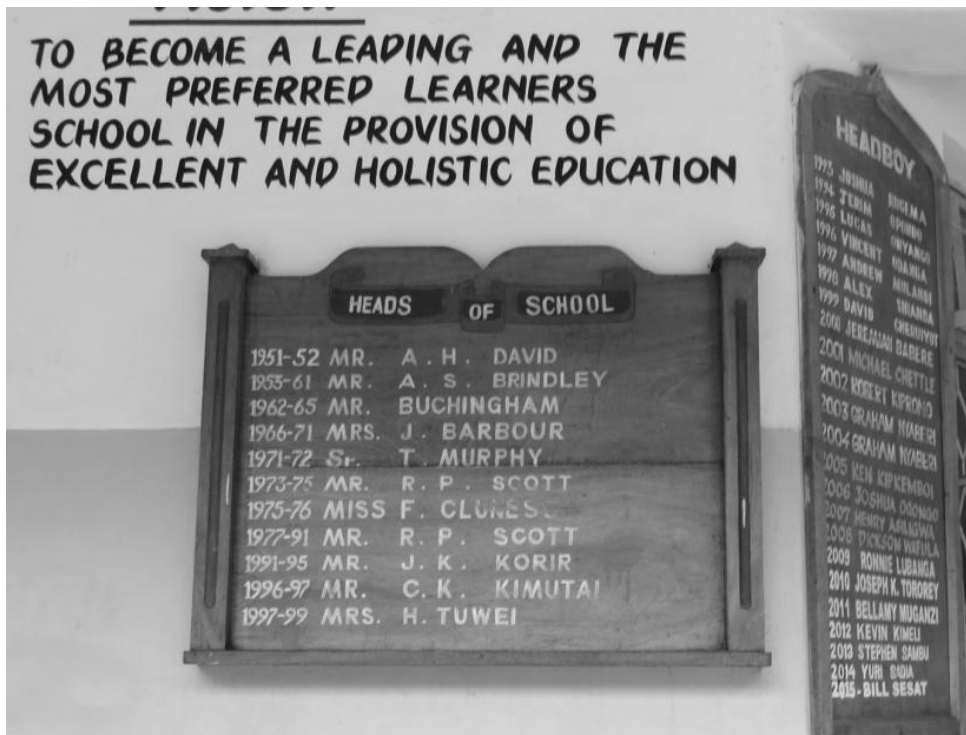
searching we eventually found what we were looking for.

Most of the huge farms of my childhood, thousands of acres in extent have been cut up into small-holdings and there are many more roads. But my childhood home was unmistakable; there stood the house I had last seen in 1965, and although it was a Saturday there were many pupils and several teachers around, and one gentleman kindly took me round. It was gratifying to see that the parquet floors, built-in cupboards, pelmets and most of the plumbing remained. What were our bedrooms had been turned into girls' dormitories, my father's old study was being used as the headmaster's study and our lounge the staff room.

None of the farm outbuildings remained but the neighbouring cottage in which my Granny lived, served as staff accommodation. The red tile roof of the main house had recently been replaced with zinc, painted a bright green. Bill attested to the fact that this house built by my father in the early fifties had to have been a very solid structure, to have been able to withstand so much wear and tear.

Sadly, but understandably there was no sign of my mother's magnificent farm garden and orchard, but a few trees remained, amongst others a magnificent Podo tree near the cottage, this being the East African yellow wood equivalent. Bill was intrigued by the abundance of bird life on the farm and near the house, including a large flock of Crested Crane. While I was walking round, reminiscing, Bill was being entertained by a crowd of school boys who were very intrigued by the vehicle, our route travelled and my history on the farm. They were so polite and spoke beautiful English. I left our farm, not with sadness but rather a feeling of gratitude that my happy childhood still stood and was filled with children's voices.

We stayed on the neighbouring farm with Jani Kruger, son of Fanie and Carol, childhood friends who remained in Kenya [Ed See *mini-SITREP XXXV – June 2010 pp37-42*]. After many weeks of camping it was rather lovely to sleep indoors, enjoy hot baths and have access to DSTV, especially as there was plenty of rugby to watch! Jani's hospitality over our three night stay was much appreciated and it was great to hear how he lives and works (as a very successful young farmer, I might add) as a Kenya-born but rather solitary white person in a predominantly black country.

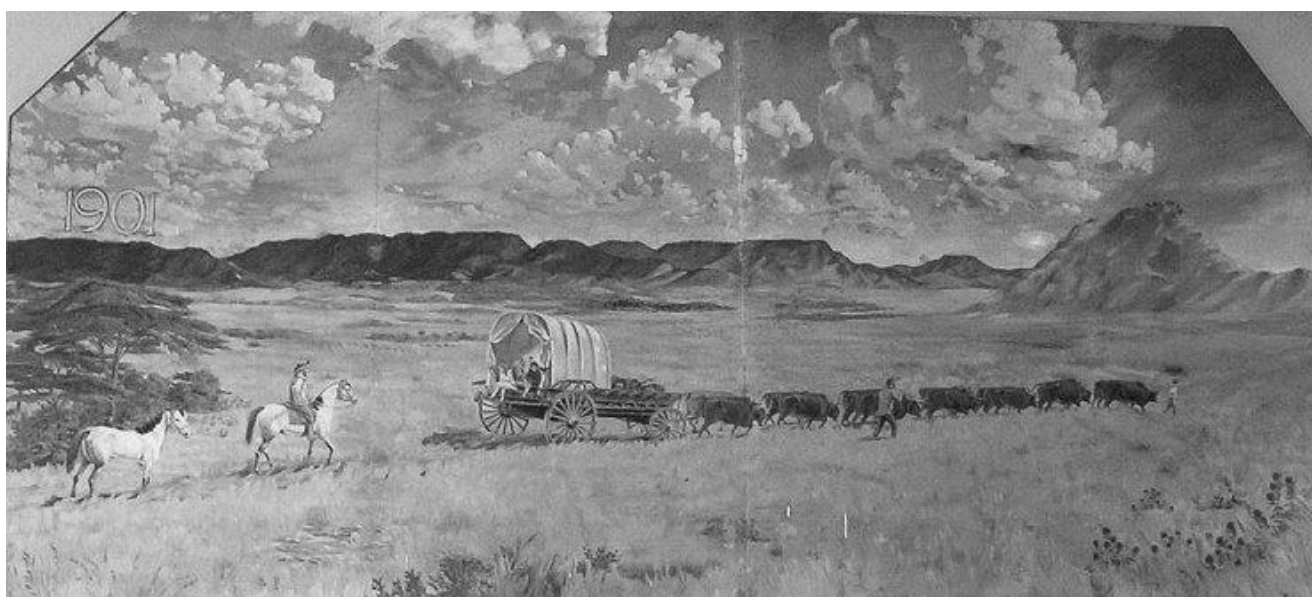


On Monday, Bill and I went to Eldoret to visit my old primary school, the Hill School [LEFT: HEAD(S) OF SCHOOL BOARD]. It was very easy to find, the well constructed colonial buildings still stood very much as I remember them, although in need of maintenance. Some teachers who we met suggested that we introduce ourselves to the headmaster, which we duly did. I was asked to complete the alumni

visitors' book and once again we were asked many questions about the past and our trip through Africa. As always on this trip, the welcome could not have been friendlier.

In my day, at its zenith the Hill School accommodated 600 pupils, now it has 1500!

So the boarding house dormitories have bunk beds but so much else was exactly the same, including two huge murals painted on the dining room walls, one of an ox wagon trek [BELOW] and



another a scene from Alice in Wonderland [BELOW]: [Ed: *Photos by Louise Heckl – submitted by Malcolm McCrow*].



The swimming pool is no longer in use. Again we were surrounded by dozens of giggling and curious little children who even asked me how old I was and the truth brought out even more giggles! (The school secretary had earlier pointed out that I was the oldest alumni who had ever visited).

And so on to our last port-of-call in Eldoret.

On the way in, Bill had seen a sign pointing to the ‘European Cemetery’. This is now in the middle of an informal settlement but we found our way and I was able to walk almost straight to my grandfather’s grave, he was known as Oupatjie. His granite tombstone [RIGHT] still stood proud in a plot marked off by a small wall, the plot at his side meant for my Ouma Eksteen. The inscription mentions him as a ‘bemінде eggenoot’ (beloved spouse).



For the first time on this trip into the past, I felt personal sadness. It was at the thought that my Ouma lies buried alone in a badly vandalized cemetery in far-off Somerset West, South Africa. This, above, all brought home to me the ultimate tragedy of the breakup of our family, who on leaving Kenya moved to the four corners of the earth. But this is the way it has played out and so be it.

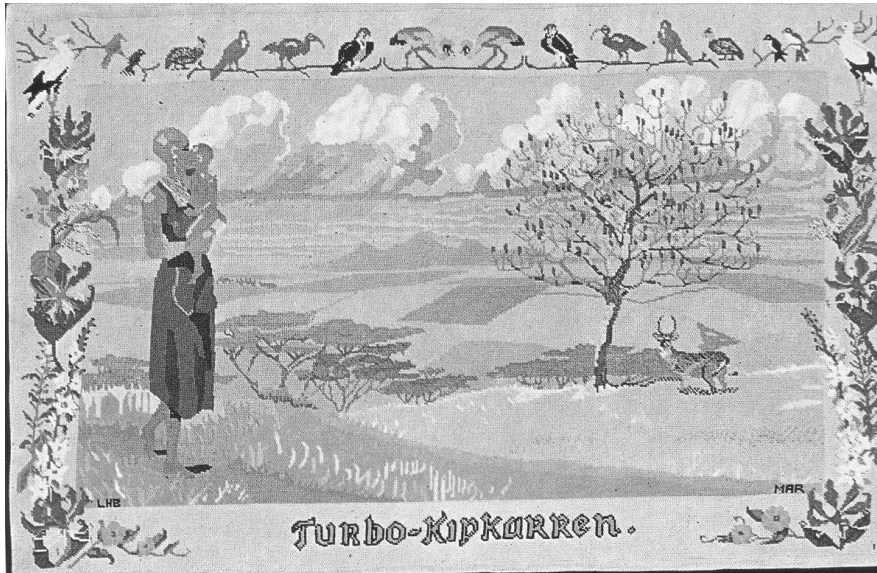
On leaving Kenya for Uganda, the man who had been helpful in getting us through the border post said “Please come to Kenya again”. Now in the midst of the Covid19 crisis where the borders of most countries remain closed, the possibility seems remote but this trip is one we would both love to repeat.

After Kenya, there were a few bucket list items to be ticked off: finding the Shoebill in Uganda, visiting Rwanda, and after an enjoyable drive down the western side of Tanzania, visiting Shiwa

Ngandu in northern Zambia. The almost four months and 22,000 kms that this journey took seemed to go by very quickly but it will remain an unforgettable one. I feel very privileged at having been able to venture back to those places of my childhood and leaving them with little sadness.

If there was any unfinished business in my mind before the trip, it is there no more. I realize that Kenya, the place of my birth will always have a place in my memory, but South Africa is the place of my heart.

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In one of your recent letters you remarked about 'how the small world is' - Kosie Barnard was married to my father's sister Gypsy, and my god-mother; we knew her as Aunty Miesie. I remember their farm name *Miti Mingi*. My aunt embroidered the EAWL tapestry for Turbo-Kipkarren [Ed: LEFT - FROM EAWL BOOK 'THEY MADE IT THEIR HOME'.]. They moved to Western Australia when we all left Kenya and have

both passed away as has their eldest son, André. I am in contact with John the other son who lives in Perth.

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### GENERAL SIR RICHARD SHIRREFF KCB, CBE



General (retired) Sir Richard Shirreff is a former NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR). He was born in Kenya in 1955 where he spent his early years. Educated in England at Oundle and Exeter College, Oxford (Modern History), he was commissioned from Sandhurst into the 14th/20th King's Hussars in 1978.

His regimental service was spent in Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland [Ed: *Awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service*], the Gulf and an attachment to 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles for a year in Hong Kong and Brunei. He commanded The King's Royal Hussars 1994-1996. He attended the Army Staff Course at Camberley in 1987, the Higher Command and Staff Course in 1999 and the Foundation Term of the Royal College of Defence Studies in 2003. Staff posts have included:

Chief of Staff, Headquarters 33 Armoured Brigade; Military Assistant to the last Commander-in-Chief, British Army of the Rhine and Commander Northern Army Group; Colonel Army Plans in the Ministry of Defence; Principal Staff Officer to the Chief of Defence Staff; and Chief of Staff

HQ LAND Command. He commanded 7th Armoured Brigade 1999-2000, amongst other things forming the core of a multinational brigade in Kosovo and 3rd (UK) Division from 2005-2007.

During this time the divisional HQ deployed as HQ Multinational Division South East in Iraq between July 2006 and January 2007. He has commanded on operations at every level from platoon to division. This has included combat in the Gulf War of 1991 as a tank squadron leader, counter-insurgency operations in the infantry role in Northern Ireland (three tours), together with Iraq and Kosovo. He qualified as a military parachutist in 2005.

Assuming command of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in December 2007, apart from preparing the Corps for deployment in support of NATO-led ISAF in Afghanistan, he also oversaw the relocation of the Corps from Germany to the United Kingdom. He served as the 27th NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) from 3 March 2011 until 1 April 2014.

For the period of January-May 2016, Sir Richard Shirreff was a Non-Resident Senior Research Fellow at the ICDS, focusing on the issue of NATO's political-military strategy and posture in the Baltic area.

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[Ed: Whilst looking for material, see Hugh Stott's request – pages 44/45 – I came across this 1943 photo of askaris from KAR battalion transport companies, undergoing driver training. Note the stones on their heads to stop them looking down to locate the clutch pedal when changing gear.]

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Readers may have observed the dearth of Kenya Regiment related articles? If so, regular contributors excepted, sadly it's your fault. If you are not forthcoming with articles and photos then I must rely on trawling the internet, and obituaries, the latter not always forthcoming. So, please, whilst we're housebound due to C19, look through old files, boxes for material for future SITREPs.

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Lastly, to readers and your families, wherever you may be, a Merry Christmas and great 2021!

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