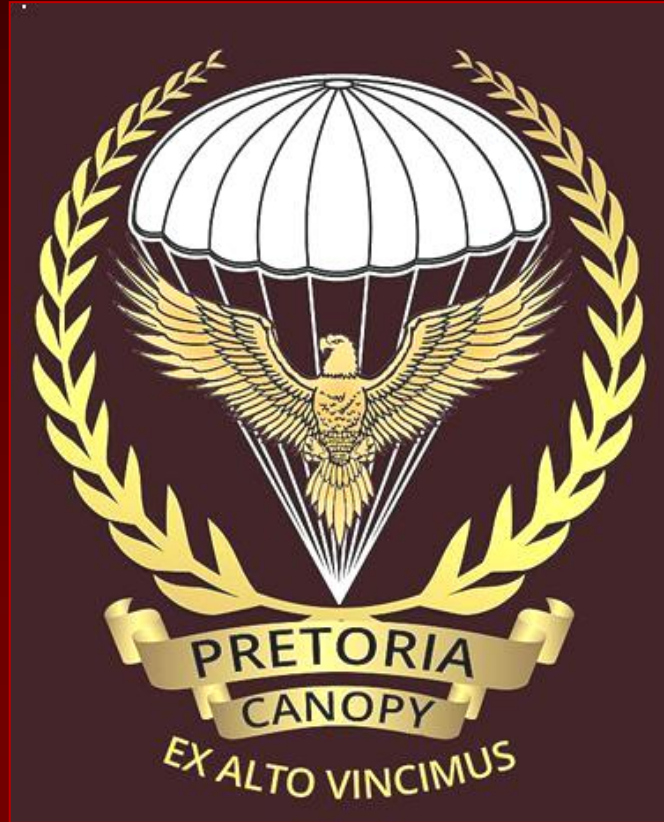


# BAT CHAT



**DEDICATED TO THE  
LETTERS / MESSAGES / ARTICLES / REPORTS / SNIPPETS  
TRIBUTE TO OUR  
NUUS VANAF ORAL / NEWS FROM ALL OVER  
UIT DIE VERLEDE / FROM THE PAST**



**PRETORIA CANOPY  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**



Voorsitter: Chris Pohl  
 O/Voorsitter: Willoughby Brits  
 Sekretaris: Wynand Fourie  
 Tesourier: Wynand Erasmus  
 Gedenkdienste: Roche Vermaak  
 Kommunikasie: Chris Pohl  
 Skakeling SANW: K. v Heerden  
 Gasvryheid: Johan le Roex  
 Werwing: Attie van Niekerk



## MESSAGE FROM THE PTA CANOPY CHAIRMAN

Die jaar is drie maande oud en het reeds vele gebeurtenisse op gelewer.

On the 22nd of February we had our annual memorial parade as where many veteran organisations did attend the day. Our thanks to each member who was involved in the day activities. Specially the ladies who supplied coffee and rusks.

Meeste Parabats is bewus van die restorering van die Aapkas. Daar word blitsig gevorder met die projek onder leiding van Ere-Kol Kamer, en manne kan 'n finansieële bydrae maak om kostes vir die projek te delg.

Die redaksie vra dat lede gereeld fotos, stories en informasie deur te stuur vir publikasie.

It must be realized that this is the only platform were our activities and history can be captured for our future generation and also to be used as a research platform.



## INDEX / INHOUD

Word from the editor	2
Admin	3
Letters, etc	4
Articles & reports	9
News from all over	36
Uit die verlede	46
Tribute	57

## NEXT PTA CANOPY MEETINGS

13 MRT / 10 APR / 8 MAY / 12 JUN



## INDEMNITY

We know readers will smile about certain strange events they read or see in this newsletter. We also know readers will not hold the editorial board responsible for every statement! This newsletter is filled with very different personal opinions of military veterans who write mainly just on their own behalf. So, they say what they like.

## VRYWARING

Ons weet lesers sal glimlag oor sekere vreemde gebeure wat hulle in hierdie nuusbrief lees en sien. Ons weet ook lesers sal die redaksie nie vir elke uitspraak verantwoordelik hou nie! Hierdie nuusbrief is propvol uiteenlopende persoonlike menings van militêre veterane wat veral net namens hulleself skryf. So, hulle sê wat hulle wil.

## VERGIFNIS IS 'N BASIESE BEGINSSEL VAN ONS GELOOF

'n Goeie geheue is van onskatbare waarde solank as wat dit kontruktief gebruik word. Indien jou geheue gebruik word om griewe en ou onregte op te gaan, word dit 'n gevaarlike en vernietigende instrument. Dit orheers die natuurlike instinkte van liefde en barmhardigheid en lei tot bitterheid en gegriefdheid.

Een van die basiese beginsels van die Christelike geloof is vergiffnis. Christus het sy dissipels nie alleen aangese om te vergewe nie; Hy het dit aan die kruis gedemonstreer toe Hy vir sy vyande gebid het.

Baie mense vind dit uiters moeilik om aan mense se swakhede en tekortkominge oor te sien. Hulle laat toe dat 'n gesindheid van weersin in hulle ophou. Hulle oordeel raak benewel, hulle uitsig vertroebel en hulle verhoudings met ander stagneer.

Indien jy weet dat jy sulke gevoelens ervaar, moet jy hulle sonder versuim aan die lewende Christus voorlê en pleit dat Hy dit uit jou gedagtes sal weer en in die plek daarvan gedagtes van vergewende liefde sal laat groei. So 'n liefde sal bevrydend in jou eie lewe sowel as die van ander inwerk.

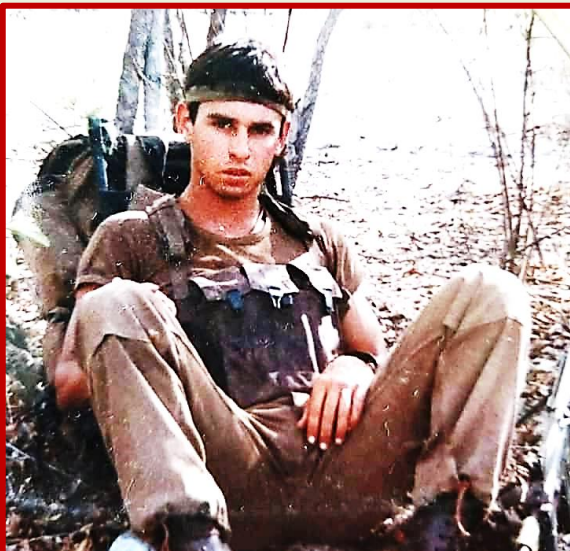
Vers om te onthou (Ef. 4:32). "Wees goedgesind en hartlik teenoor mekaar, en vergewe mekaar soos God julle ook in Christus vergewe het".

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven,  
 Hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy kingdom come,  
 Thy will be done in earth,  
 As it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.  
 And forgive us our debts,  
 As we forgive our debtors.  
 And lead us not into temptation,  
 But deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and  
 the glory, for ever.  
 Amen.







# LETTERS / MESSAGES ARTICLES / REPORTS / SNIPPETS FROM ALL OVER

**PRO PATRIA MUSEUM**

**YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED UP!**

**PRO PATRIA MUSEUM MILITARY FAIR**

**1 MAY 2026** 09H00 TILL 15H00

Celebrate **60** year since the start of the **Bush War**

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RATPACK CHEF OF THE YEAR  
MILITARY BAND DISPLAYS  
INFANTRY FITNESS CHALLENGE  
IRONING COMPETITION  
GRENADE THROWING COMPETITION  
MILITARY RE-ENACTOR DISPLAY  
FIRE DEPT DEMONSTRATION  
BIGGEST MILITARY BOOK SALE IN SA  
COLOURING COMPETITION  
150 STALS  
& MUCH MORE

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VOORTREKKERMONUMENT  
AMPHI

DRESS CODE:  
CAMMO  
(IF YOU DARE)

MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW



Johan Van Der Meshe

Ek het nou die ander dag baie lekker gelag. Ek het n uitnodiging vanaf die Canopy manne gekry om saam met hulle te kom skouerskuur. Bietjie later praat ek met 'n paar van die bats wat toe vir my vertel hulle was van die eerste manne wat na my gaan soek het na my aanval. Maar ongelukkig het hulle my nie gekry nie. Nee se ek vir hulle, julle het my gekry 43 jaar later.



## RECOVERY AFTER *Storms of Life* ONLINE COURSE

Do you feel overwhelmed, like waves are crashing over you, leaving you struggling to breathe? This online self-investigation process offers a safe space to repair your lifeboat after storms. In six guided weekly sessions, you'll process emotional pain, share with others who've faced similar struggles, and prepare to navigate the next season with strength and hope.

R750 pp

5 Feb to 12 March

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079 749 0019

- Broken relationship
- Divorce
- Death of a loved one
- Work loss
- Crises or Trauma
- Diagnosed with Cancer
- Challenges with choices of childrer



For more info contact  
083 234 9806 • eilize@elehos.co.za  
084 014 4957 • marius@emmetcc.com



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**STORMS of LIFE** online course is created to support inter alia Parabat military veterans who feel overwhelmed by life's challenges—whether from stress, coping with change, trauma, or general struggles with mood and motivation. It provides tools to cope, build resilience, and strengthen mental and emotional well-being in a flexible, self-paced format.

Please contact PVO President Willoughby Brits at 079 749 0019 or

[willoughby.brits@parabat.org.za](mailto:willoughby.brits@parabat.org.za)

for further detail



## OPERATION DIKMELK 1967

The source that informed the South African embassy in Washington DC about a planned air attack was a member of the CIA. It was always assumed that the information was leaked on purpose to warn the South African government against any possible aggressor/s and to give South Africa an opportunity to defend itself but also as a cover to ensure that the United States of America (USA) was not involved in any confrontation. The USA government was afraid that nine C-130 aircraft would be used for the planned attack, which was to take over key air bases in SWA. It was thought that military airbases in Zambia would be used to launch the attack. The Pentagon was also afraid that, unless the South African government did not act decisively, a situation could arise, that would force the USA to act on behalf of the UN. The Pentagon also hoped that the SADF would be able to react in time to nip this planned attack in the bud and by doing so prevent a possible confrontation between South Africa and the USA.

The deployment order<sup>1</sup> was send out on 12 December and it instructed that one C130 was to move immediately from Eros to Rooikop to transport one company of 2 SA Inf Bn Gp to Katima Mulilo and one infantry company by C130 to Runtu.

The next message<sup>2</sup> that was posted half-an-hour later gave the operation instructions. These instructions were: that the freedom fighters had to be prevented to take over the airfields at Katima Mulilo, Runtu, Ondangua, Grootfontein, Tsumeb and Windhoek he company of Captain Barries Ferreira were doing training exercises in the Kalahari, when Commandant Jan Fourie ordered him to move the company to South West Africa, Windhoek. (Mo Oelschig, Julius (Jakkals) de Jager and Nic Visser). One company at Windhoek (Battalion HQ) and one at Katima Mulilo (B Company) Walvis Bay as standby. <sup>3</sup>

### THE PARATROOPERS HEADQUARTERS

as told by Rowley Medlin\*



"The Battalion had just returned from another operation/exercise along the South African/Lesotho boarder when Bravo Company (+) and the HQ Company was put on a two four-hour standby. This meant all our equipment had to be packed, transported to Air Force Base Bloemspruit. Three Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft were already on the apron. A short while later we were put on a two-hour standby. This meant that all our equipments including (I think it was two) but it might have been four jeeps with twin barrel machine guns mounted were loaded on to the aircraft. Our kit was all on pallets and the kit lashed down to the pallets. Once in the C-130's cargo holds the pallets and kit lashed to the mooring eyes in the aircraft. The jeeps were loaded centrally and were lashed down with strong thick chains. Half-an-hour standby and we were all on the apron, most of us laying in the shade of a hanger but some 'enjoying the breeze' sitting under the wings of the planes. Not for long however because:

"All aboard' and the three platoons of B Company plus the additional platoon and the Coy HQ went to the rear of our aircraft and the Platoon Sergeant/Company Sergeant Major (In our case again if the memory serves me, it was Trevor Floyd,) were up and down checking us. The loadmaster allowed us to file in and take seats from the front backwards; four rows of seats, two against the bulkhead facing inward and two back-to-back in the centre facing the

1. Top Secret Telexes Immediate - no BGG/193/Dec 67, DTG 121125B from BGGGM

2. Top Secret Telexes Immediate - no BGG/194/Dec 67, DTG 121200B from BGGGM

3. Read the book **4 SADF OPERATIONS** by Paul J. Els.



bulkhead up to the jeep. Then there were a gap and the same seating again behind the jeep and equipment. Most of the personal equipment was on a pallet lashed to the rear ramp. Boy, talk about being loaded? If roof carriers were allowed, I am sure some kit or piece of equipment would have ended up on the roof carrier”.

“The take-off was like almost every other take-off with the troopers singing and clapping until the plane was in the air.”

As every soldier knows there is just never space during the first hour of flight for one's feet. Miraculously after the first hour everyone seems to find space where he can put his feet. Flying like that at 25 000 it was not only cramped but also damn chilly. Being in the blazing sun for hours in Bloemfontein in November and the next few minutes flying where ice formed on the portholes is quite a change but one soon seemed to get used to the chill.

“Some three and a half hours later the planes came in for a landing, flying at tree top level for a number of kilometres, Bush, bush and more bush and it felt like every tree had its own built-in air pocket that the plane bucked through. At last, one felt the tyres make contact with mother earth. Now that it was nearly over, the cramped conditions seemed to worsen. Eventually, even before the plane came to a complete standstill the loadmaster was opening the rear ramp. Looking at the ever-widening opening, hoping to get your first glimpse of the Caprivi, it was like looking directly into a World War II search light. One could not look out as the glare was simply too bright. Loosen safety belts pick up all your kit. The Load Master reminding those that had used a doggy bag to take it with them as a souvenir. Then the shuffle over the roller bars on the floor for the pallets to the 30/40-centimeter jump to the ground. Ones legs were so cramped that even a small jump like that could cause a broken leg. Then the glare of the sun reflecting off the white shale stone used for the apron. The glare was bad but the heat was worse. This heat made Bloemfontein's heat that we had left only three and a half hours earlier feel like an air conditioner on full-blast. Looking around to get one's bearings, there was nothing, only this long stretch of runway with a small apron and the whole lot surrounded by bush. No hangers, no control tower not even a soul to welcome us. What a sight for a young soldier: Our C-130 was the first to land, and we had just got out when the second one and then the third one came in”.

“We were immediately set to off-loading the planes. In that heat we had to off-load everything manually. There were no fork lifters at this deserted airstrip in the middle of the African jungle. Once everything was off-loaded, the planes took off again leaving us to the freedom fighter hiding in the surrounding bush. For the new boys, this being their first trip as well as for most of us, being the first time flown into the 'terrorist nest' of the Caprivi, the experience was unique and a bit scary. I mean the freedom fighter could come barging out of the bush at any time. Our platoon sergeants soon barked us back into reality and we had to carry everything off the apron and a few hundred metres into the bush. This was to be our base for the next unknown number of days/weeks until we were recalled to Bloemfontein or as happened, redeployed”.

“Each Platoon was allocated a defensive position, each section was allocated a field of fire and we started digging-in. Hell, this was easy. Not like De Brug or other areas we had deployed. One hardly needed the pick part of the tools entrenching. The ground was just sand, a finer sand than sea-sand but very similar. Defensive positions dug and ready for use, we were allowed to build our bivies as but even then; the platoon sergeant told you where to pitch. Close enough to be in communication with the rest of the section and close to your trench. Bivies were made from our ponchos held up with tree stumps and open at both ends to allow the breeze to filter through. The main 'establishments' of the camp: the HQ, the Ops Room,



the communications room and the kitchen were under tarpaulins. The NCOs were: Sergeants Braam (Blommetjies) Blom (later RSM Army Gym) was the signaller, Eddie Button was Dems, Ben Pretorius was CQMS, and Schalk van Schalkwyk was the admin clerk. Other names that were there was: Trevor Floyd, Ouboet Kruger, Dewald de Beer, and myself as Battalion Medical Sergeant. My Medical Officer was Dr (Cmndt) Willem Anton Klomp. Company Commander was Barries Ferreira. Other officers were Daan Nell, Willem (Kaas) van der Waals and Nick Visser†”.

“First task was to deploy the Medical Post. A tarpaulin over a few tree stumps, sand bag walls and seat and the wicker-pannier containers used as the tables for the instruments and all Doc Klomp’s paraphernalia. Slit trenches for both the MO and myself and one for two or three patients”.

“Next task was camp hygiene. Here I was given a fatigue team to do the actual digging. In those days, we relied a lot on the British RAMC pamphlets and teaching and RAMC pamphlet number huffles and sniffles said if a company has to spend two or more weeks in a base camp, it must have two deep trench latrines: eight feet long two feet wide and at least six feet deep. Easier said than done. Those writers of the shuffle and sniffle RAMC pamphlets had never been near Rundu and had never tried to get a deep trench dug in the soft sea-sand of Rundu. Every time we got to three feet down, the wall started caving in. But a ‘boer makes a plan’. I got the fatigue party to first go and cut down a lot of sapling trees and as we progressed I used these stumps to hold the walls of the deep trench latrine. Eventually, the MO was satisfied with one latrine but also saw the trouble so he gave in to the company having only one ‘diep sloot’ latrine but I was not satisfied with my effort and having tree stumps over erected a very effective seat over the ‘diep sloot’ This consisted of two poles about eight inches apart on which the person could sit and meditate while doing his business. The rear pole supported the rear end of the backside while the front pole supported the legs. This worked well for about the first two days until jippo guts set in. A company with of 120 men plus an extra platoon and an HQ company with jippo guts soon filled the ‘diep sloot’ but before it filled completely an incident happened but due to the security classification has never been published before.”

“The latrine, to get away from the ‘Ovambo Budgies’ was situated up-wind about 150 yards outside the perimeter of the camp. Standing orders were that anyone wanting to use the latrine, had to take someone armed who kept guard while his mate was groaning with cramps.” “That day, the MO, Klomp came running past me and shouted: “*Medlin bring jou wapen, gou man, gou*”. I grabbed my weapon and ran after my MO as he disappeared in the direction of the latrine, loosening his web belt as he ran. Arriving there, he was already in reverse mode, reversing onto the ‘seat’ but his weight or the action was too much for the back pole and it gave way. The result was that it tipped the MO backwards into the ‘sloot’”.

“Well, even if there was a whole battalion of freedom fighters appearing at that moment, I would not have been able to anything. For me, a sergeant, seeing my officer in such a predicament, made me totally useless as a guard. It was one of the funniest sights of my career. Needless to say, the saga was not over, because the MO and I had to find a way back into the base to the medical tent where I could boil up enough water for my MO to have a bath to get all the grime and sea sand off him. ‘If this story every gets out, Medlin, you will never, ever get any more promotion’. Well, I don’t need any more promotion now”.

“Another incident that comes to mind was when a few of us sergeants were sent to the town of Rundu. The purpose of the visit is unclear but we ended up as guests of the South African Police who said that they would like to entertain these paratroopers by buying them a beer or two/three? In the mess was a policeman who I later found out was the notorious ‘Nick




'Arlow' who had been 'fired' from the SAP for things that happened in the Republic. He obviously was not 'fired' but transferred to Rundu where the normal South African, buying for his blood, would not find him. Nick had obviously been sitting there for some time before we got there. He and Pep van Zyl started discussing the pros and cons of the 9mm SMC that we used and the similar weapon the police used.

Not long into the conversation, an argument started as to which weapon was better than the other. Pep was adamant that with the very short barrel of the police weapon, it was dangerous as in an emergency; a man grabbing the weapon and firing 'could' end up with his finger covering the muzzle. 'Bull Sh\*t' was Nick's comment and the whole lot of us trooped outside the mess where there was a heli landing area with a few empty Avgas drums. Targets were put up and the two weapons loaded and each one placed on a drum. Frans (FC) van Zyl was the judge. He shouted 'fire' where upon both SADF and SAP competitor grabbed his weapon and fired without sights at the target. This happened numerous times when suddenly, there was a gasp from the renowned policeman and he bent over dropping his weapon with blood pouring out of his hand. I ran over and found his middle finger had suddenly become a digit shorter than a few minutes before. Bandaged him up and he was taken off to the SAP sick bay. It was as Pep had said; in an emergency one was likely to get a finger over the muzzle of the short piece of barrel".

"I remember the day we received orders to pack up. 'Home before Christmas' was on everyone's lips but no one knew and those that knew were not going to tell. Everything packed and ready for the C-130s to come in, we filed for brunch. The stove was an open pit with a 'rooster' (grill) over it. No need to ask what was for brunch: 'Ovambos' and bread. While waiting in the queue, Eddie Button had been given instructions to destroy all the opened boxes of ammo and explosives. All of a sudden there was a helava explosion. I just saw all the 'Ovambos' going up in the air and landing in the sand. Everyone's nerves were shattered. What was the new menu: bread"?

"In the planes, still thinking we were on our way back to Bloemfontein, we touched down after a short flight and the pilot used his boosters to stop the plane before the end of the runway. This was Eros, Windhoek. The planes, one by one reversed into the hanger and we were allowed to get out. No one was allowed to go near the door. Our plane, off-loaded, and moved out to allow the next plane to reverse into the hanger and off-load. This was our home for the next week or so".



**INVITATION TO  
PARATROOPER MEMORIAL AND CASSINGA DAY  
PARADE**

Sunday 3rd May 2026 at 10:00 for 10:30

At the Museum of Military History,  
Saxonwold, Johannesburg


**Dress Code:**  
Association Blazer and Tie, Beret and Medals  
Ladies: Smart Casual

Wreathlayers to present their Wreaths to the Wreath  
Table by 9:30


Attending Ladies are requested to bring a plate of  
eats (sweet or savoury) to be enjoyed with tea and  
coffee directly after the Parade.

We will then gather at Steel Helmet Shellhole, Cor  
2nd Ave & 16th St  
Pankhurst, Johannesburg.  
Cash Bar available.

Looking forward to seeing you there.



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2026**



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Mikey de Sanders. Rhodesian Bush War Living History Group

The sun, a molten orange, bled across the eastern sky, painting the thorny acacia trees in stark silhouettes. Dust, fine as flour, coated everything, clinging to the sweat-slicked skin of the men gathered around the map spread on the bonnet of a battered Land Rover. Early 1976. The air already thick with the promise of a sweltering Rhodesian day. Captain Chris Schulenburg traced a finger along a faint, dotted line. His gaze, sharp and unyielding, swept across the faces of his fledgling Recce Troop.

"Intel confirms a major ZANLA movement Mount Darwin area," Schulenburg's voice, a low rumble, cut through the pre-dawn quiet. "Bloody terrs crossed from Moz pushing south, aiming to cut the main supply route near Bindura. We hit them ,and call in support."

Sergeant Stephen Mpofo, his FN FAL slung casually across his back, nodded, his eyes scanning the crude map. "More of them than us, sir. You know the gooks, always more."

"That's why we're here, isn't it, Stephen?" Captain Tim Callow, a gaunt man whose eyes held a perpetual flicker of exhaustion, offered a dry chuckle. "To remind them numbers don't always win." Sergeant Dave Scales, a wiry man with a permanent five o'clock shadow, spat a stream of tobacco juice into the dust. "What's the play, then? Hit and run? Or are we really going to try and hold ground in the bundu?"

Schulenburg's finger paused over a cluster of contour lines. "Neither. We're going to hit them where they least expect it. Disrupt their command, sow chaos. Buy our boys time to regroup." He looked directly at Mpofo. "Stephen, your team moves in from the west. Martin, you take the ridge to the east. Dave, with me, we'll establish a forward observation post, guide the strikes."

Sergeant Martin Chikondo, a man of quiet intensity, adjusted the strap of his pack. "Understood, sir. We'll make sure they know we're here."

"Good." Schulenburg clapped a hand on Scales' shoulder. "Remember the drill, lads. Speed, surprise, and absolute ruthlessness. These aren't farmers with pitchforks. These are trained killers, but they don't have our resolve."

A distant bird call echoed through the bush, a mournful sound. Mpofo tightened his grip on his rifle. "They'll be waiting for us, Captain." "Let them wait," Schulenburg's lips curved into a grim smile. "We'll just make sure they're waiting in the wrong place." He straightened, the map folded and tucked into his webbing. "Move out. Stay sharp. We leave no man behind."

The men dispersed, shadows melting into the pre-dawn gloom, the only sound the crunch of boots on dry earth and the rhythmic creak of webbing. Each man knew the stakes. Each man understood the impossible odds. But in their eyes, there was no fear, only a fierce, burning resolve. They were the Selous Scouts, and the bush was their domain.

\*This is not a true account but it's purely Creative writing: I am just imagining how it was in those days \*





## The MOST HIGHLY DECORATED SOLDIER IN THE RHODESIAN ARMY AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH.

### Life & Achievements of Sergeant Head Wuranda, SCR BCR

Rhodesian Bush War Living History Group. Justin Dickson.

**Early Life & Joining the Scouts:** Sergeant Head Wuranda (service number 644758) became a legendary figure in the Selous Scouts, the elite counter-insurgency unit of Rhodesia. The Selous Scouts were known for their high-risk operations, deep reconnaissance, and pseudo-operations. T Wuranda volunteered for service and was accepted into 3 Troop of the Selous Scouts, demonstrating both courage and exceptional skill.

#### Decorations & Valor

What makes Head Wuranda especially notable is his rare distinction of having been awarded both the Silver Cross of Rhodesia (SCR) and the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia (BCR)—marking him as one of the most highly decorated non-commissioned officers in the Selous Scouts.



- The Silver Cross of Rhodesia was awarded for conspicuous gallantry.
- The Bronze Cross of Rhodesia recognized acts of bravery under fire.

#### Acts of Exceptional Bravery

Several episodes from his service highlight exactly why those awards were bestowed:

1. **Mozambique Operation (June 1976):**
  - During an external operation into Mozambique, Wuranda came under heavy enemy fire.
  - Despite being completely exposed, he provided covering fire with his machine gun from a double-storey building.
  - His actions allowed fellow Scouts to re-enter the building and extract wounded colleagues, a display of selfless courage.
2. **Overcoming Injury:**
  - Earlier in his career, Wuranda stepped on a landmine.
  - The explosion cost part of his leg; yet after recovery and receiving an artificial limb, he returned to active duty.
  - His determination to continue serving despite a severe injury earned him immense respect among his peers.
3. **Infiltration & Intelligence-Gathering:**
  - His SCR citation recounts how he and a small Scout team infiltrated guerrilla-held areas, even living among "CTs" (insurgents) for two days to gather vital intelligence.
  - This kind of bold deep-recon work was one of the hallmarks of the Selous Scouts' approach, and Wuranda embodied that ethos fully.

#### Legacy

- **Model NCO:** As a sergeant who earned both the SCR and BCR, Wuranda stands among the most decorated non-commissioned soldiers in Rhodesian special forces.
- **Respected by Comrades:** His resilience, especially returning to combat after losing a limb, made him a symbol of commitment and strength within the Scout brotherhood.
- **Selous Scouts' Tradition:** His story is woven into the lore of the Selous Scouts, celebrated for bravery, tenacity, and sacrifice. The Soldiers' Association honors figures like Wuranda for how they personified the Scouts' daring and skill.



### Conclusion

Sergeant Head Wuranda's life is a testament to extraordinary courage and dedication. He pushed beyond personal adversity, performed extraordinary acts of valor, and earned his place among the very few NCOs to hold both the Silver and Bronze Cross of Rhodesia. His legacy remains a powerful part of the Selous Scouts' history – a symbol of what loyalty, bravery, and self-sacrifice look like in the face of danger.

### Credit

- The Selous Scouts Regimental Association archives
- Gentleman's Military Interest Club Library and Archives Canada
- JRT Wood The Selous Scouts Regimental Association+2 Selous Scouts+

### COURSE V7718 BLOEMFONTEIN



1st Row: Cpl G. L. Caddick (Instr.) Kpl S. S. Baard (Instr.), F. Hydenrych (Instr.), Maj A. Bestbier (Opl VI Bev/Trg Wing Oc), Kmdt/Cmdt E. Olekers (BN Bev/Bn Oc), Lt D. I. Bleauw (Adj) AO/WOI J. H. Kieser (RSM), Sers/Sgt J. D. Oberholzer (Instr), B. R. B. Mclvor (Instr).

2nd row: Tpr K. M. Casey, F. J. Potgieter, B. H. Bothwaite.

3rd row: Tpr D. Miller, J. A. Gurr, B. J. T. O'Driscoll, R. I. Williams, I. J. Gillespie, D. A. Wilkins, Cpl S. J. van Wyk, Tpr R. C. Byng, Sgt. J. D. Collett.

4th row: Bdr P. B. Campion, Tpr W. M. Hume, R. G. Knight, R. Brassens, G. C. Baldwin, J. W. Behrmann, L/Cpl. R. E. MacDonald, Cpl. R. Bracchi, Sgt T. Kruger, Tpr B. A. Schooling.

5th row: WO2 K. H. Reed, Tpr. K. Turner, A. de Montille, A. R. V. Evans, Capt J. Hickman, Tpr E. A. Dawson, W. A. Hodgson, G. M. Galloway, G. Dettmer.

6th row: W.O.2 L. R. Thackwray, Tpr J. D. Prinsloo, Cpl S. G. Pollard, Sgt H. J. Barry, Tpr S. R. de Courcy-Hamilton, C. J. Scott, W. C. Nall, 2Lt R. Fourbes, Tpr. K. Pring, B. N. Hahn.

7th row: Tpr K. D. Oldham, Cpl P. J. Opperman, Lt A. B. Shaw, Tpr I. R. J. Downing, M. Traun, I. Swannack, C. A. Saunders, 2Lt D. Gilmour, Tpr A. J. Stebart.

8th Row: Tpr N. Cantle, P. Burke, N. Valdall, M. H. Butcher, F. D. Wright, A. M. Millar, K. J. Robinson, N. K. Surgey, J. G. Pimm, A. B. MacDonald.



## JUST FOR A LAUGH were you subjected to this?

As someone who served in a predominantly 'african' unit, my Sergeants regularly inspected my men for the dreaded VD etc by mustering the men for a 'short arms inspection'.

A 'short arms inspection' is:

- A. Blood test to detect indicators of dwarfism risk in pregnancy.
- B. A determination if someone is of Scottish lineage....or
- C. A physical examination to check for a venereal disease in men.



**SHORT ARM INSPECTION**



### 1 VALSKERM BATALJON MANNE

#### Kiewiet Bronkhorst

Hier is ons in die koeikamp na die kwalifiserende nagsprong in Aug 1964. Op hulle hurke voor is ons PT instrukteur sers Koos Moorcroft, sers Simon Riekert instrukteur, en my stringinstrukteur sers Jeff Burger. Staande agter hulle kpl Oelschig, staf Botes, beide instrukteurs, 'n Portugese kolonel op besoek wat die volgende dag in die hanger ons vlerkies en beret's aan ons oorhandig het, staf Harry Finlay ons kursus onderoffisier en RSM van die Valskermopleiding skool en kapt vd. Berg bevelvoerder van die Valskermskool. Agter hulle met die staaldakke ons knape, die meeste van ons pas uit die skool en nog nat agter die ore tot na vanaand. (Sien foto in volgende bladsy.)

# UIT MY FOTO ALBUM KAAS VAN DER WAALS

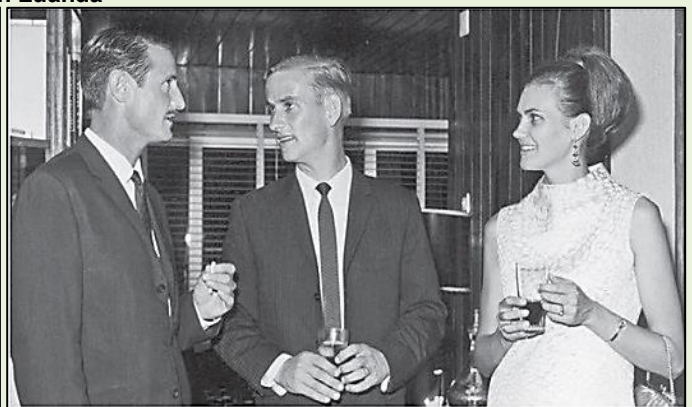


Vleuelparade Aug 1964

Boemfontein 1964. / Ontvang my vlerkies vanaf die bevelvoerder van Portugese Valskermbataljon (Sept 1964) [BCP21] in Luanda



Troue Paar!  
28 Des 1967



Saam met my voorganger, mnr. (kol.) Jannie Geldenhuys in Luanda, April 1970.



Angola was 'n visstermansparadys. Hier staan ek met die vangs van die dag.



Operasionele diens in Bindura (Rhodesië) saam met kmdt. Piet Moller in Rhodesiese uniform. September 1977.



'n Besoek aan Kinmen-eiland tydens die politieke oorlogvoeringkursus in die Republiek van Sjina (Taiwan), November 1977.



By die formele diensaanvaarding as weermagsattaché in Paraguay saam met pres. Alfredo Stroessner, 1 Januarie 1980.



Genl. Stroessner word oor die G5-kanon voorgelig in die teenwoordigheid van my opvolger, kol. Albert van Driel.



Toekenning van die Orde van Militêre Meriete (Kommandeursklas) deur genl. Samaniego, die minister van verdediging, November 1982.



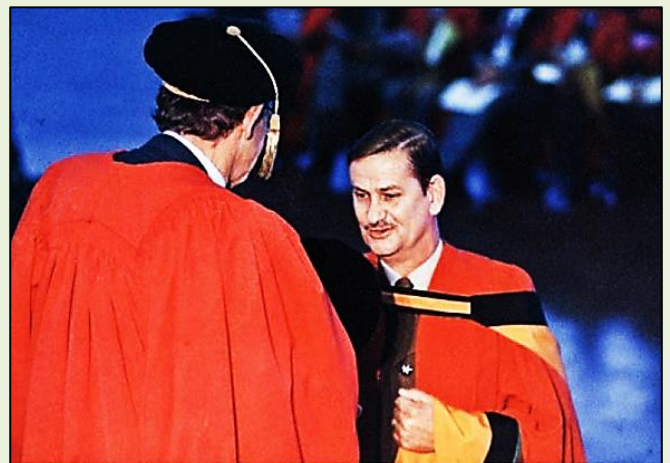
As gasheer by die Direkoraat: Buitelandse Betrekkinge se prestige-aand, November 1992.



Ons seun Johan ontvang sy 21<sup>ste</sup> stemetjies tydens uitpassering by die Infanterieskool Oudtshoorn, Desember 1988.



Die gassprekers by die internasionale konferensie in Luanda in Augustus 2015. Van links na regs: dr. V. Shubin (Rusland), ek, genl. Pezarat Correia de Carvalho (Portugal), genls. Guillermo Frank Yanes, Rafael Moracem Limonta en S. Betancourt Correia Cruces (Kuba) en genl. Miguel Junior (organiseerder).



Uiteindelik my "rooi jas". Ek ontvang die D.Phil-graad by UOVS op 15 September 1990.



'n Medaljeparade in Mei 1992.



Saam met ons kinders en kleinkinders.

VENOMOUS	NON-VENOMOUS
<p><b>Timber Rattlesnake</b> <i>Crotalus horridus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognized by a tail rattle, a shovel head, facial pits (see picture), and vertical pupils.</li> <li>Adult length: 36-54 inches</li> <li>Typically a yellowish color with brown or black bands down its back.</li> <li>Found in deciduous forests on rugged terrain.</li> <li>Hibernates in rocky crevices and dens.</li> <li>Endangered in several Northeastern states: NJ, VT, MA, and NH.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eastern Hognose</b> <i>Heterodon platirhinos</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguished by an upturned snout (see picture), lack of facial pits, and round pupils.</li> <li>Adult length: 18-45 inches</li> <li>Variable coloration; can be spotted yellow or all black.</li> <li>Found in woodlands with dry sandy areas.</li> <li>When threatened the hognose will flatten its neck and bring its head up off the ground.</li> <li>It may also play dead.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Copperhead</b> <i>Apitrisodon concoloris</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognized by a copper brown red shovel head, facial pits (see picture), and vertical pupils.</li> <li>Adult length: 24-36 inches</li> <li>Juveniles have tails with yellow tips.</li> <li>Found in forests, rocky outcrops, and farmland fields.</li> <li>Endangered in MA.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eastern Milk Snake</b> <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguished by a Y or V on the top of its head, tapered tail, a lack of facial pits, and rounded pupils.</li> <li>Adult length: 24-36 inches</li> <li>Typically has bands of red brown black down its body. Its underbelly is checkered white and black.</li> <li>Found in fields, forests, or rocky outcrops.</li> <li>Has a broad range across the Northeast.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cottonmouth</b> <i>Apitrisodon piscivorus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognized by black "hourglass" bands on its back, a flattened head, facial pits (see picture), and vertical pupils.</li> <li>Adult length: 30-43 inches</li> <li>When threatened the cottonmouth will expose a white mouth.</li> <li>Found near freshwater.</li> <li>Range does not extend further north than Virginia.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Northern Water Snake</b> <i>Apitrisodon sipedon</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguished by dark bands down its body, a narrow head, a slender body, a lack of facial pits, and round pupils.</li> <li>Adult length: 24-42 inches</li> <li>Coloration can be brown, reddish, gray, or black.</li> <li>Found near freshwater.</li> <li>Has a broad range across the Northeast.</li> </ul>

**Quick Tips:**

- Venomous snakes are very rare in the Northeast.

**Why Are Snakes Important?**

- Snakes are an essential part of ecosystems because they act as both

## HOW TO IDENTIFY DIFFERENT BUG BITES

<p><b>Mosquito</b></p>	<p><b>Ant</b></p>	<p><b>Tick</b></p>
<p><b>Bedbug</b></p>	<p><b>Scorpion</b></p>	<p><b>Bee</b></p>
<p><b>Flea</b></p>	<p><b>Spider</b></p>	<p><b>Wasp</b></p>

Hashem Al-Ghaili / Science Nature Page

**Elephants walk almost silently despite their huge size — each elephant's foot has a thick, cushion-like pad made of fatty, fibrous tissue that absorbs sound and shock, allowing a 6-ton elephant to move quietly through the savanna.**

## COMMON ANIMAL TRACKS

Badger	Bear	Beaver	Cat	Cow	Crow
Dog	Duck	Eagle	Ferret	Fox	Frog
Gerbil	Goat	Hedgehog	Heron	Horse	Lynx
Marten	Moose	Mouse	Otter	Owl	Partridge
Pig	Pigeon	Rabbit	Raccoon	Rat	Sparrow
Red Deer	Roe Deer	Sheep	Squirrel	Weasel	Wolf

# NUUS VANAF ORAL NEWS FROM ALL OVER

01/01/2026 – 31/03/2026



Willoughby kuier by Fairview Wyn Landgoed en lekker geeet met die geselskap van Charles Back. 18/01/2026.

## ONS GEE OM!



Die tjek is oor handlg in Randfontein aan die familie deur Gerrit Moolman 18/01/2025



A Coy 83/84 se jaarlikse motorfiets trip. Die keer na Loxton. Die Windpomp bar met oud Recce Alwyn Vorster (agter derde van links.)

Manne het soos Bats betaam die kroeg gesluit 05h30 saam met Alwyn die Sondag oggend. Die kroeg sit reg oorkant die kerk en konsistorie.

Ds se die oggend blykbaar so droogweg in die kerk.

“En Ja broers en susters so skuins na 02h00 toe besuin die Sound of Silence van DADurbed deur die dorp”.

Met manne wat saam sin. 31/01/2026



# 23/01/2026 PTA CAOPY



Pretoria Canopy het die jaar op 'n hoë noot afgeskop. Heerlike samesyn saam spesiale gaste - Genl Kaas vd Waals ons spreker. Genl Les Rudman, Genl Blackie Swart, oom Ronnie Claassen, oom Albert van Driel, Kol Frans Fourie en andere asook paar manne van spesmagte. Ook Barry Visser, seun van oorlede Nick Visser.



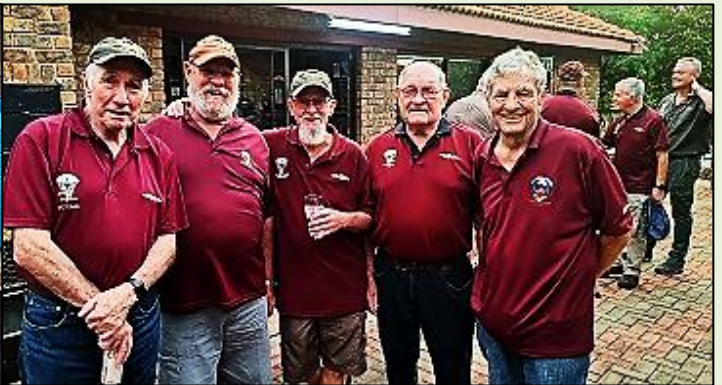
Baie dankie aan Genl Kaas vd Waals vir 'n besonderse en meesleurende praatjie. Genl, jou vertelling oor die vroeë dae van 1 Valskermbataljon het herinneringe laat herleef, en hou die geskiedenis lewendig en gee weer nuwe kole vir die trots in ons harte. Die spesiale eer en vermelding aan Nick Visser, was diep roerend. Dit herinner ons aan die prys wat betaal is en die manne wat nooit vergeet mag word nie.

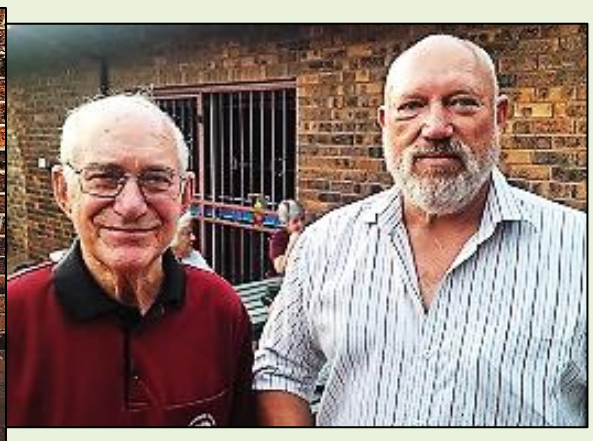
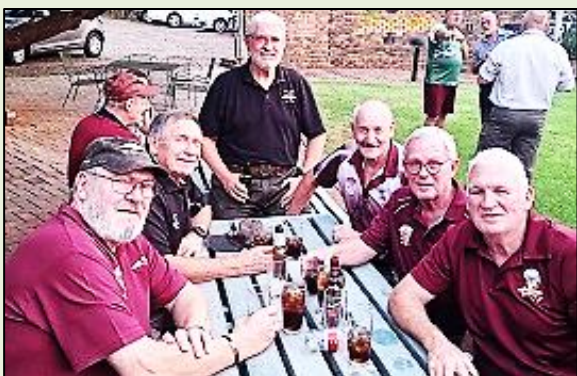


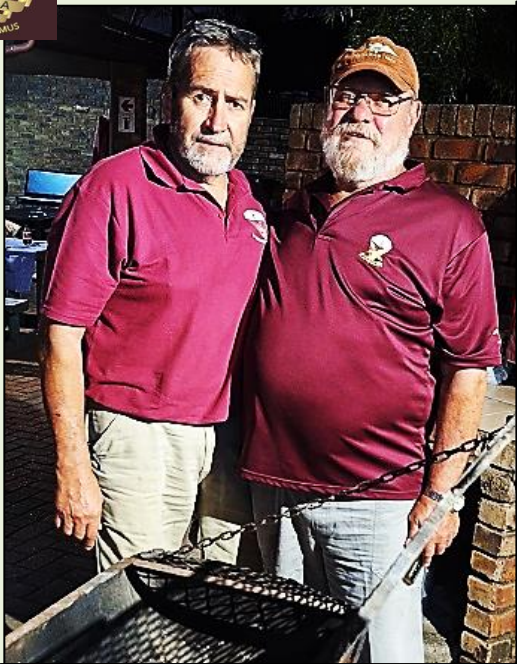
Dankie manne vir jul teenwoordigheid, broederskap en gedeelde herinneringe.

Geleenthede soos vannaand bevestig weer wie ons is, waar ons vandaan kom en waarom die band tussen Parabats tydloos is. Hierdie aand sal lank in ons harte bly.









### PTA Canopy Meeting Call Up

**Stand in the Door ...**

Date: Fri, 20 January 2023  
 Time: 18:00 for 18:00  
 Event: Evenses Plek 122  
 Address: 122 Grootvlei, Cape Town  
 GPS: 33° 52' 40.00" S, 18° 29' 10.00" E  
 Description: Koffie, Informasie / Scrum, Bredie & Braai offeraars, ONS 1ste en 2de Wêreldoorlogse reëls - 1900-1918  
 Topic: 1ste Wêreldoorlogse reëls: die reëls: 1900 - 1918  
 Bygga Gedeeltes (Bygga Gedeeltes, Naby) van die Wêreld, 1918-1919

Guests: Welkom!

**Wes die Eerste Daar**

**Portugal's WAR IN ANGOLA 1961-1974**

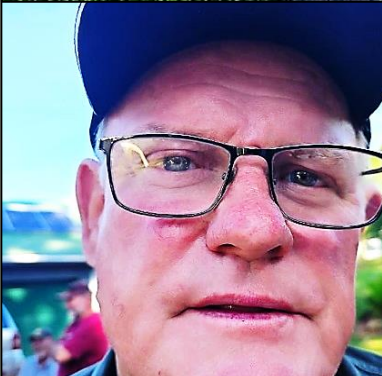
W.S. van der Walt



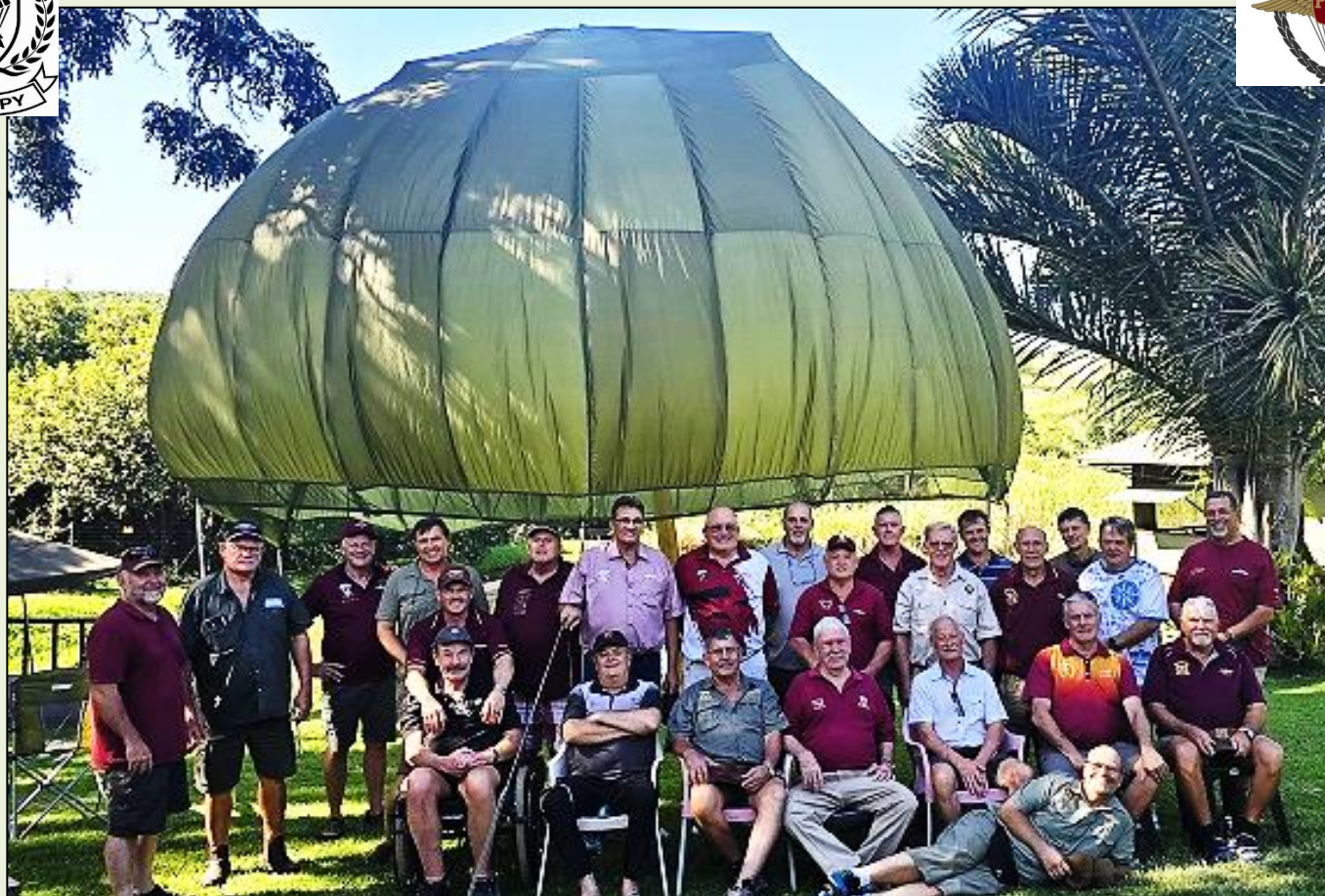


# LAEVELD CANOPY

07/02/2026



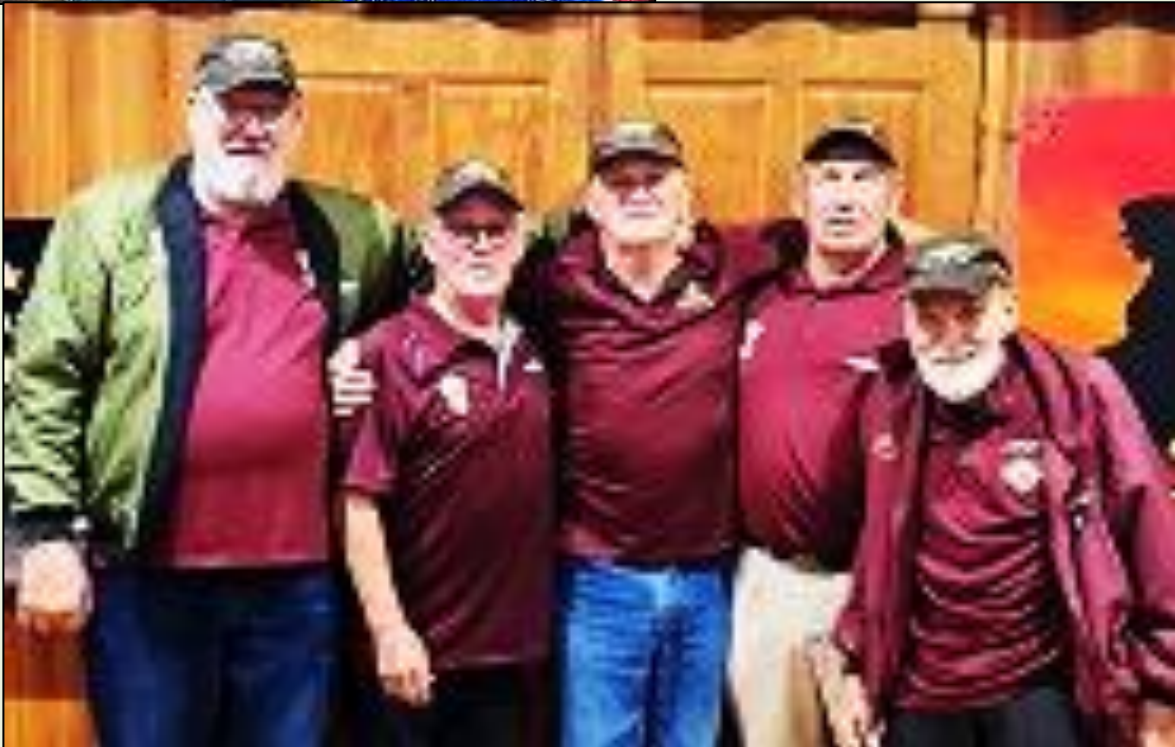
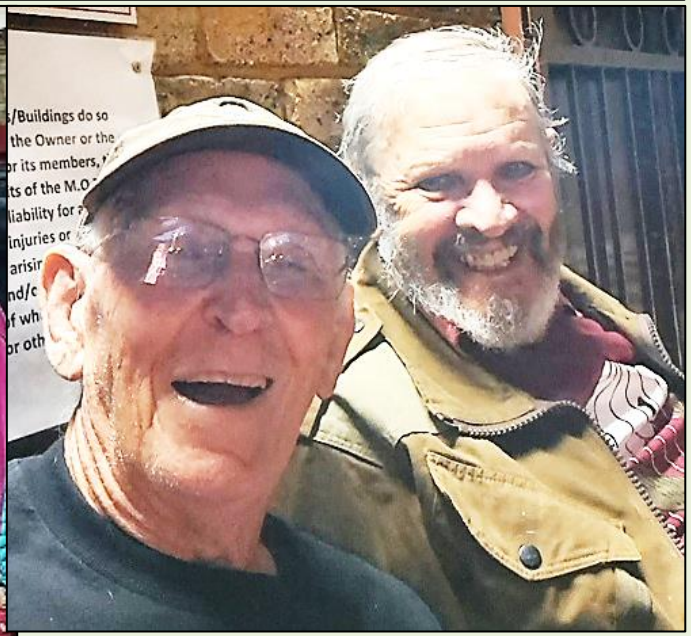


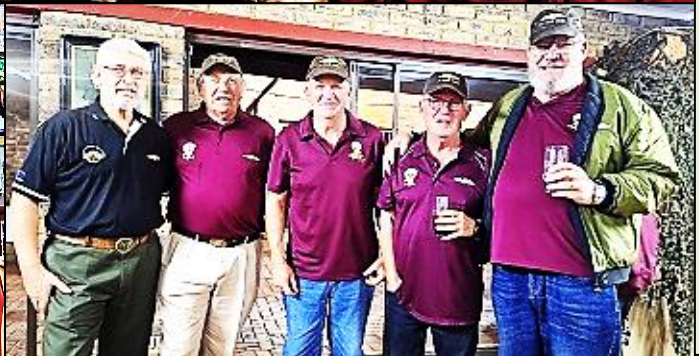




# 13/02/2026 PTA CANOPY

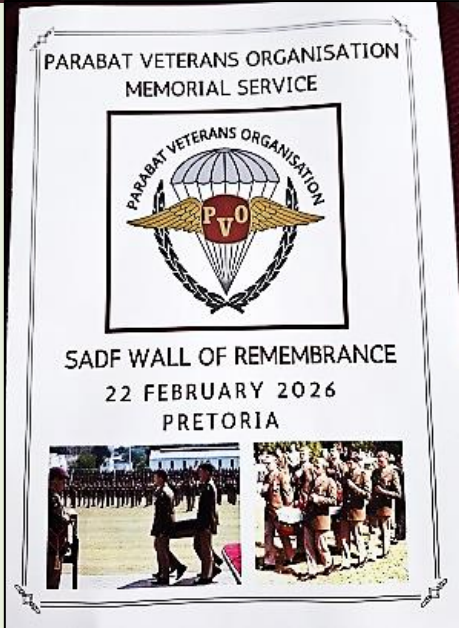






13.02.2026 19:51

# 22/02/2026



Vandag, 22 Februarie 2026, het die Parabats ons jaarlikse PVO-gedenkdienst by die Voortrekkermonument gehou. Dis altyd iets besonder om daar bymekaar te kom. Nie vir vertoon nie, maar om ons gevallene te onthou.

Ons het stil geword vir elke man wat alles gegee het - die hoogste prys betaal het!

Toe dit saak gemaak het, het hulle nie teruggestaan nie. Die prys is betaal sodat ander kon leef, kon huis toe gaan, en weer hul geliefdes kon omhels.

Hulle name mag in klip gegraveer wees, maar hul nalatenskap leef voort in ons - ons kan nie die verlede verander nie, maar ons sal onthou - elke dag. Hul leef voort in ons harte, in ons herinneringe, en in ons gedagtes.

Elke man tell!

**Ex Alto Vincimus**

Baie GROOT dankie aan Roche, Willoughby en hul gades wat voor gevat het met die reëlings, asook elke Canopy lid wat gehelp het om die dag suksesvol te maak









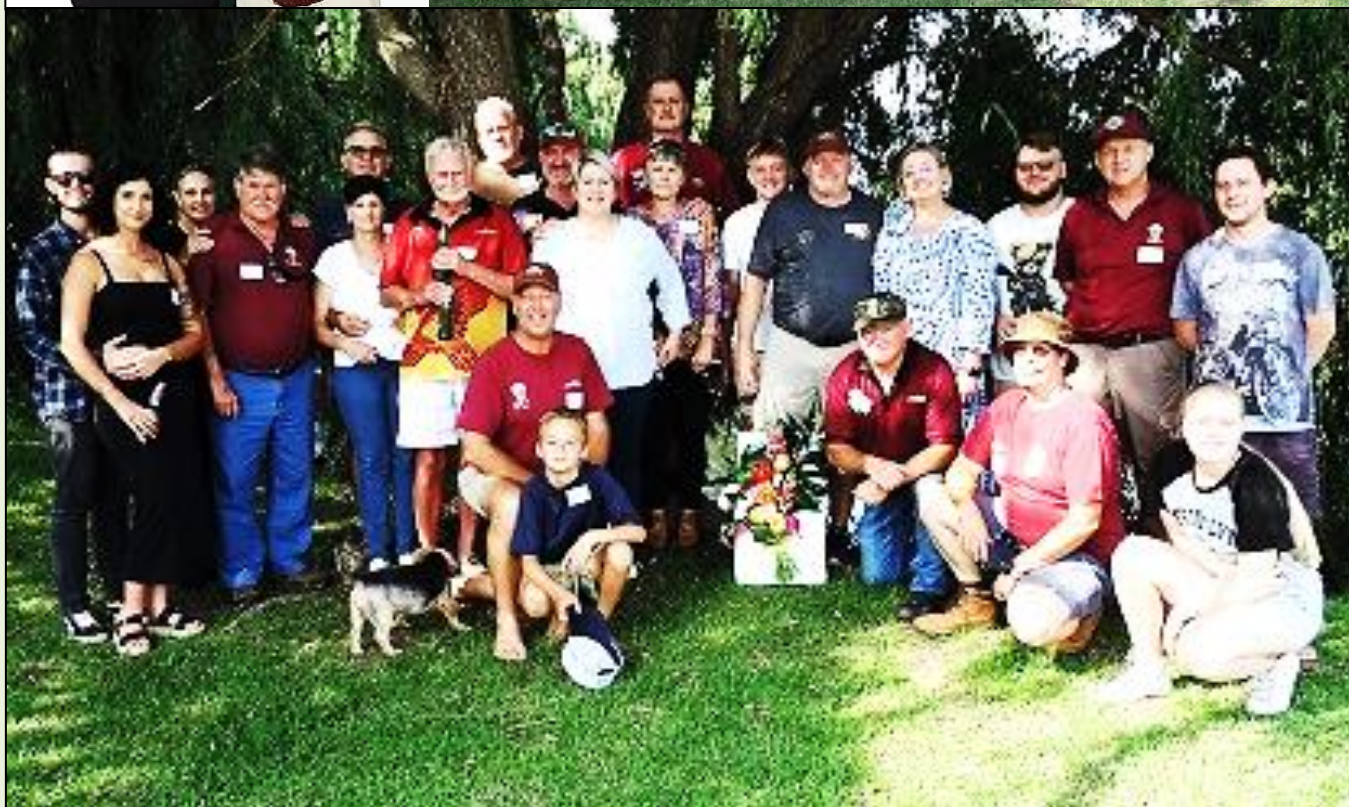


# HIGHVELD CANOPY

## 28/02/2026



2026-02-28 Hoërvelde Parabat Kuier - Witbank  
 Van L-R: Buks Torre, Wallace Schmidt, Evan Dauberman, Chris Krynauw, Willie Theron, Shaun Smith, Ronnie Pietse, Tinus Barnard, Greg Beamish, Tinus Cordier en Willoughby Brits





# OPERATION: RESTORE THE GLORY

## TO THE AIRBORNE BROTHERHOOD: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

At 09h00 this morning of **03/03/2026**, at SA Army HQ, a pivotal strategic meeting was held with Lt. General Mbatha, Chief of the SA Army. The outcome is a historic victory for our heritage.

### THE TACTICAL PIVOT: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Following an in-depth consultation, we have moved with professional precision to refine our mission title. By removing one word, we have performed a vital act of discretion to protect our legacy:

### MISSION UPGRADE: OPERATION RESTORE THE GLORY

I have debated this at length with the Chief of the Army. We are in total agreement: Prevention is better than cure. This new wording aligns perfectly with the current strategy of the SA Army and avoids drawing unnecessary attention or scrutiny. By refining the name, we prevent unwanted drama and ensure our mission remains focused and beyond question.

### SECURED: THE 50-YEAR HERITAGE GUARANTEE

This morning's meeting secured a win that goes far beyond a title. The General's personal backing as Chief of the Army is the only way to ensure the lifelong safety and protection of our history.

**Protecting the Aapkas:** With the COA's full endorsement, the Aapkas is positioned for official recognition. This high-level support ensures it remains standing as a protected site for the next 50 plus years minimum, regardless of future command changes.

**The 5th Element:** The General is also fully aware and supportive of our 5th Element initiative at the Ditsong National Museum of Military History, ensuring our legacy is honoured both at the unit and on a national stage.

### COMMAND COMMITMENT

Lt. Genl Mbatha is now fully behind this initiative. He will personally attend the 65th Anniversary of 1 Parachute Battalion on 30 April 2026 to witness the restoration of the "Elite of the Elite."

We have honored the past by securing the future. The Aapkas is safe. The legacy is supported. The Glory is ours to restore.

**Ex Alto Vincimus!** 

**Second to None!** 

**Airborne All The Way, All The Way Airborne!** 

**Operation: Restore the Glory**

Raymond Clive Kramer Colonel (Hon) / Project Lead. SA Army Infantry Formation







RESTRICTED

1



sa army  
Department of Defence  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

1 Para Bn HQ /R/103/1

Telephone: 051 402 1600  
Extension: 051 402 1266  
SSN: 850 1526  
Cell Phone: 083 7500425  
Facsimile: 051 402 1504  
E-Mail: Kmoleti@yahoo.com  
Enquiries: Maj K.E. Moleti

Department of Defence  
1 Para Bn  
Private Bag X40008  
Bloemfontein  
9301  
01 March 2026

**1 PARACHUTE BATTALION 65<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY PARADE AND THE UNVEILING OF THE RE-VAMPED OUT DOOR EXIT TRAINER (AAPKAS) 30 APRIL 2026 IN TEMPE**

- 1 Parachute Battalion would like to extend a special vote of thanks to Col (Honorary) R. Kramer for taking heed of the plea, turned an ear to the Battalion request with the urge to restore the former glory of this elite force under the auspices of 44 Parachute Regiment.
- Colonel Kramer your unwavering support and commitment towards this Battalion has indeed ignited, re-kindled the light of hope to inspire and encourage the young generation, prepare them to take over the baton from the current and the generation of the living legends.
- The Battalion cordially invite the Military Veterans, former serving members of this elite battalion and all associations as led by Col Kramer to attend the parade on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2026. The dress will be according to ceremonial parade and the veterans to wear their respective blazers (jackets), applicable ties and trousers.
- The parade will be followed by the unveiling of the Aapkas, 1 Parachute Battalion wall which depicts 65<sup>th</sup> years that are interchangeable every year and the cutting of the cake at the Regiment club. The day will be closed with meals provided, format still to be discussed and celebrations at the bar or unit swimming pool. It should be noted that the final sequence of events are still to be discussed and all members are welcome to provide inputs and suggestions.
- All Military Veterans and Sponsors reservations to be coordinated through Col (Hon) R. Kramer of Paratrooper Heritage Foundation: email address: [Colonel@raymondkramer.co.za](mailto:Colonel@raymondkramer.co.za).



Lotapha La Boiphaemelo, Umyango we zoku/Vikela, Kgoro ya Thaireletso, Isibhe Lezokhuzelo, Department of defence, Mhasho wa Taredzo, Umyango we zoku/Vikela, Ndzawelo ya s'wa vhusi/veloti, Lotapha la Tshilidzozo, Likho La Tekuvikela, Department van Verdediging

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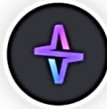
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2

**1 PARACHUTE BATTALION REQUEST: SPONSORSHIP AND MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR THE UNIT BIRTHDAY ON 01 APRIL 2026**

- For your action.

(K.E. MOLETI)



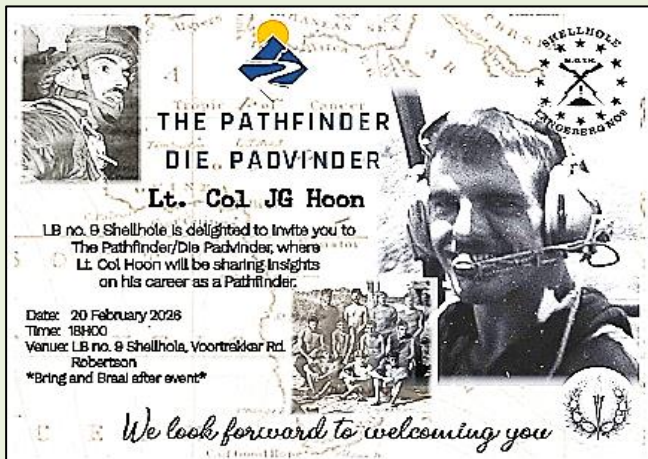
**EX ALTO VINCIMUS**





14/02/2025 tant Mossie Valentyn blomme. Bo: Koos kuier by Fairview Charles Back se plek. 26/02/2026

**EDITOR:** Please send me any stories/photos around Tant Mossie for next Batchat. Send to [paul@who-els.co.za](mailto:paul@who-els.co.za) ASP



THE PATHFINDER  
DIE PADVINDER  
Lt. Col. JG Hoon

LB no. 9 Shellhole is delighted to invite you to The Pathfinder/Die Padvinder, where Lt. Col. Hoon will be sharing insights on his career as a Pathfinder.

Date: 20 February 2026  
Time: 18H00  
Venue: LB no. 9 Shellhole, Voortrekker Rd. Robertson  
\*Bring and Breaal after event\*

*We look forward to welcoming you*



A short trip to Robertson to attend a talk on the Parabat Pathfinders by Kobus Hoon. The event was hosted by Langeberg No. 9 MOTH Shellhole. We had an awesome time! (Thanks again to Gavin for the great photos!) 20/02/2026





# 13/03/2026 PTA CANOPY





**14/03/2026.** Ek het die Bats verteenwoordig by die gedenkdiens van AO1 Braam Blom, RSM van Leer Gimnasium vir baie jare. Braam is 'n Bats veteran van Savannah en Cassinga. Ek het sy tree stok ontvang vir bewaring by die PPM Seiners uitstalling. RIV. **Paul J. Els**



### MIDMAR

08/02/2026

Johan van Eeden. and  
Gavin Smith.

C Komp 79-81



### WEST RAND CANOPY

Dear West Rand Canopy Members and friends, our West Rand Executive Committee had their first Management Meeting today. We have, approved and released the Minutes of the Annual General meeting of 26th February 2026 and Feedback and Financial Report of Military Expo Event that was held and hosted by our canopy, on the 28th of February 2026.

These reports will be available on The PVO West Rand Canopy Administration group. Only official members, with a PVO number and West Rand Canopy number can have access to this group and the documentation that is approved for publication by the Exco Team. For more info and requests to be added to this group, if you are not yet a member, please feel free to contact Gerhard on 083 608 0876 or Alternatively Amanda 082 254 8387. Have a super Weekend!

Amanda Morris

Secretary of the West Rand PVO Canopy 13/03/2026





Cowboy Town 28/02/2026. Left: Roche Vermaak with his thing. / Right: Wesrand Canopy.



Left: Cowboy Town. Right: Lowveld Canopy place and date unknown.



Left: Cape Canopy AGM with present and past C Coy Cmdrs – with Maynhardt M.L. Marais and other at Goodwood, Western Cape. Right: John Michael Tawsw “Deep South’ Cape Peninsula Pathfinder’s with Paul edgecome, Craig Gerber and Lance Mindry. At Firsh Boek Beach. Below John Michael Tawse with Mark Wiley and 4 others at Fish Hoek Beach. DATES UNKNOWN.





Finally got a moment to post some pics of the last two active weeks of C-47 land jumps followed by Super Huey Waterborne operation into Lake Weir in Florida with 36 South African Parabats coming to jump together. The oldest being Capt Roy Williems 83 who got jump qualified in 1963 when most of us were toddlers A pleasure seeing old faces and jumping with new airborne brother. Korf





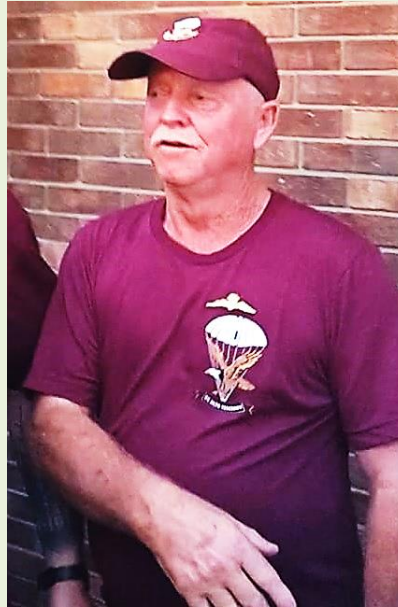
OPERATION YSTERVARK  
WATER JUMP  
X35 DUNNELLON, FLORIDA, USA  
MARCH 11-15, 2026

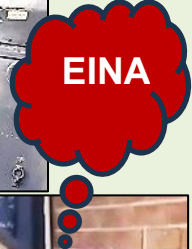
**1 PARACHUTE BATTALION**

**CAPT. ROY WILLIEMS**  
**1 PARACHUTE BN.**  
Airborne Qualified 1963  
*(before parachutes were properly invented)*

**AN ORIGINAL YSTER**  
*An honour for us Parabats to parachute jump with you from  
a perfectly good aircraft into a lake with 13K alligators*

**“LIVE LIKE ROY”**  
**AIRBORNE!!**  
**ROOPLAAS USA**





Danie Blom ontvang sy wings die tradisionele manier **Eina!!!**

## WEST RAND CANOPY

A reminder to join the official West Rand Canopy Facebook Group, see link on this page and herewith an update on today's event.

Dear West Rand Canopy Members and friends, our West Rand Executive Committee had their first Management Meeting today. We have, approved and released the Minutes of the Annual General meeting of 26th February 2026 and Feedback and Financial Report of Military Expo Event that was held and hosted by our canopy, on the 28th of February 2026.

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Have a super Weekend!

Amanda Morris

Secretary of the West Rand PVO Canopy




**Kalkgat 13/03/2026**





# PVO BOSBERAAD

Our strategic direction for the next five years  
2026 - 2030

Five clear priorities

*Everything we do must align with these pillars*





## National Council, Governance and the Road Ahead

### Naas Grové - PVO Strategy

The Parabat Veterans Organisation (PVO) recognises the diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives of its members. Through democratic participation within our Canopy structures, we create an environment in which South African paratrooper veterans can work together in pursuit of the Vision, Mission and Values of the PVO. This collective approach remains one of the defining strengths of the Organisation and reflects the enduring principle of “for the Bats, by the Bats.”

The PVO is not a *casual veterans’ or old boys club*. It is a credible, compliant and nationally recognised institution. As a full member of the Council for Military Veterans Organisations (CMVO), the PVO remains the only officially sanctioned paratrooper veterans’ voice within the broader military veterans’ environment. This standing, together with the Organisation’s sound constitutional foundation, governance practices and recognised credibility, places a serious responsibility on those elected to manage its affairs.

Since its founding in 2015, the PVO has made good governance central to its success. In a non-profit context, strong governance ensures efficient resource use, fosters stakeholder trust, supports transparency and accountability, and allows the PVO to act with integrity. The organisation’s commitment to clear structures and policies has shaped its respected brand and defined its purpose.

In March 2026, the National Council met in Bloemfontein for its sixth strategic Bosberaad since 2017, having previously convened at various Canopy venues across South Africa. The Bosberaad aims to review the Organisation’s environment, evaluate its mission and effectiveness, and maintain long-term relevance and value. Strategic planning is a practical leadership task essential for staying focused and capable.

The Bosberaad highlighted that strategy matters only if it is communicated clearly. Members need to know both the direction and purpose of the Organisation. Clear communication fosters buy-in, alignment, and commitment within the PVO.

The outcome of the *Bosberaad* is the Strategic Master Plan (SMP) 2026–2030, formally adopted and approved by the National Council on 21 March 2026 in Bloemfontein. The SMP provides the PVO with a structured five-year roadmap to guide organisational development, improve service to members, preserve our heritage and ensure long-term sustainability, relevance and our *raison d’être*.

The Strategic Master Plan is built around five key priorities:

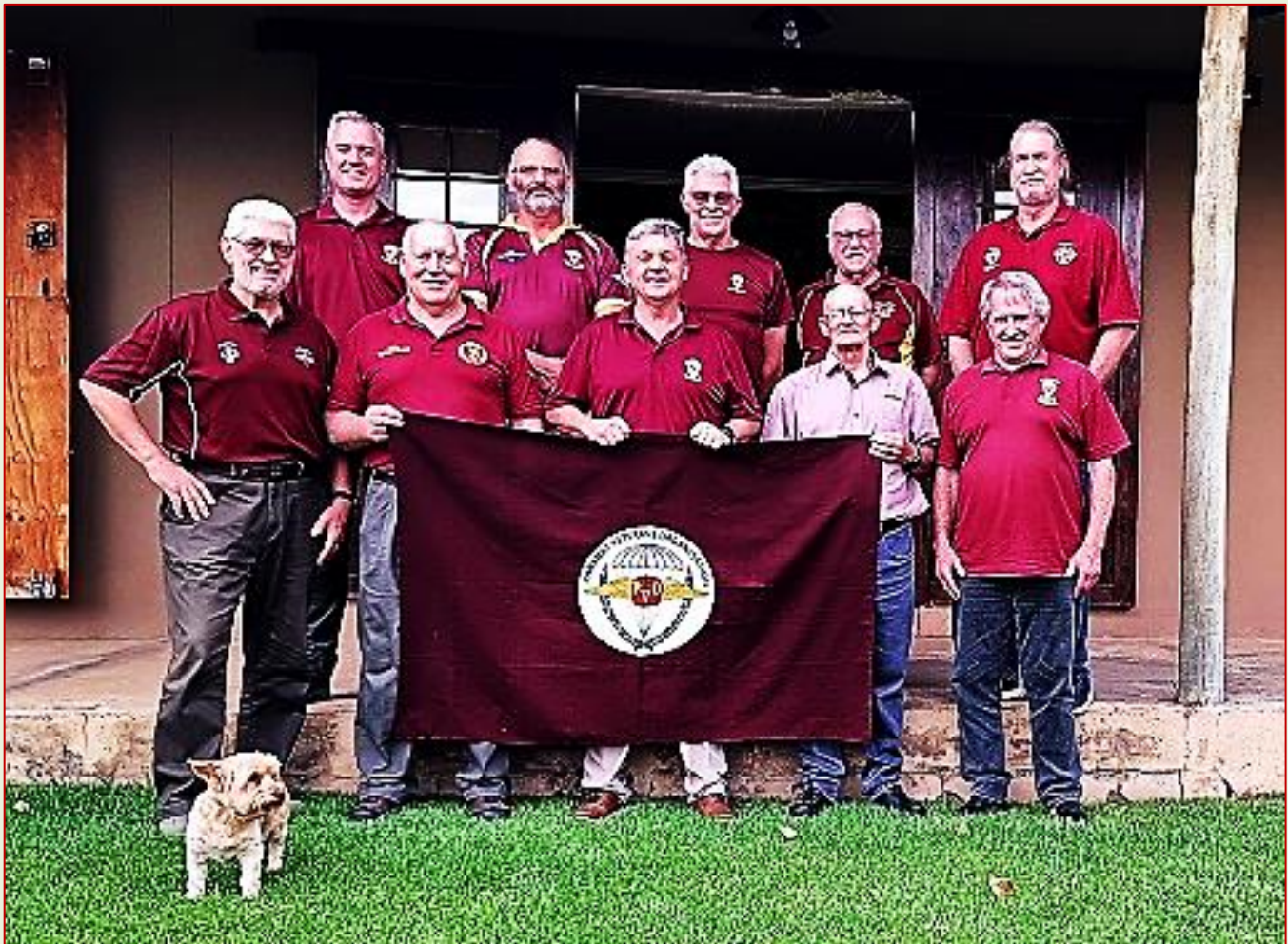
- 1. Digital Transformation** Modernising, integrating and securing the Organisation’s systems.
- 2. Organisational Strengthening and Capacity Building** Improving governance, structures, leadership continuity and sustainability.
- 3. Cultural Heritage and Legacy** Preserving and promoting the history, traditions and identity of the Parabat community.
- 4. Veteran Enablement, Impact and Relevance** Enhancing meaningful support to veterans and their families.
- 5. Strategic Partnerships** Strengthening relationships, collaboration and influence in the broader veterans’ environment.

The SMP will be implemented in phases from 2026 to 2030, focusing on improving communication platforms, integrating membership systems, executing strategy, managing finances, building capacity, and planning for succession—areas identified in past and recent reviews.

Members are advised that the Strategic Master Plan functions as a supplementary guide and does not supersede the Constitution. Its purpose is to provide a structured framework for implementation,

accountability, and ongoing development, all within the parameters established by the Organisation's constitutional provisions.

The SMP shows the National Council's commitment to strengthening and preparing the PVO for the future. Leadership at PVO is not ceremonial; it requires dedication and discipline. The *Bosberaad* confirmed the Council's focus on responsible stewardship, credibility, and future positioning.



Front - Krige van Heerden, Butch Williamson, Willoughy Brits, Mario Swanepoel, Gerhard (Krappies) Kotze,  
Back – Chris Pohl, Johan Cronje, Johan de Bruin, Barry Olivier and Naas Grové.

**In closing:**

The PVO's strength lies not only in its history, but in its ability to organise, adapt and act with purpose. With the Strategic Master Plan now adopted, the Organisation enters the next five years with renewed focus, a clearer roadmap and a united commitment to serve paratrooper veterans with credibility, integrity and impact.

***For the Bats, by the Bats.***





## PVO NOTICE - Strategy



Dear Members

The PVO Strategic Framework 2026–2030 was officially approved by the National Council on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2026 after a strategic *Bosberaad* were held in Bloemfontein.

This gives the Organisation a clear roadmap for the next five years, with focus on:

- More integrated systems
- Better governance
- Preserving Parabat heritage
- Greater support to veterans and their families
- Stronger partnerships

The framework does **not** replace the Constitution. It is a practical guide to help build a stronger, more sustainable and future-ready PVO.

Further updates will follow as implementation progresses.

Issued by the National Council: Parabat Veterans Organisation

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026



## PVO Kennisgewing - Strategie



Geagte Lede

Die PVO Strategiese Raamwerk 2026–2030 is op 21 Maart 2026 amptelik deur die Nasionale Raad goedgekeur na afloop van 'n strategiese *Bosberaad* wat in Bloemfontein gehou is.

Dit gee aan die Organisasie 'n duidelike padkaart vir die volgende vyf jaar, met fokus op:

- Beter geïntegreerde stelsels
- Beter bestuur
- Die behoud van Parabat-erfenis
- Groter ondersteuning aan veterane en hul families
- Sterker vennootskappe

Die raamwerk vervang **nie** die Grondwet nie. Dit is 'n praktiese riglyn om te help bou aan 'n belynde, meer volhoubare en toekomsgerigte PVO. Verdere terugvoer sal volg namate die implementering vorder.

Uitgereik deur die Nasionale Raad: Parabat Veterane Organisasie

23 Maart 2026



# 29/03/2026 ANIMALS IN WAR

"ANIMALS IN WAR"  
PARADE  
29 MARCH 2026  
VOORTREKKERMONUMENT





# UIT DIE VERLEDE / FROM THE PAST “DOWN MEMORY LANE” SA PARATROOPERS



**THIS GROUP OF PARABATS GATHERED TO FORM A PARATROOPER'S ASSOCIATION.**

Standing: Nic Grobler; Mike Callingworth; Matt Loots; Chris Viljoen; Jannie Greyling; André du Plessis; Sampie Eilers; Harry Finlay; Ted Manderson; Ras Laubscher. Front: Hans Human; Ronnie Claassen; Marius Wittle; Theo Nel; JC van Wyk. Below: Hans Human and JC van Wyk. (Hans Human.) (Taken from the book: *'Genade van bo'* by Paul J. Els.)

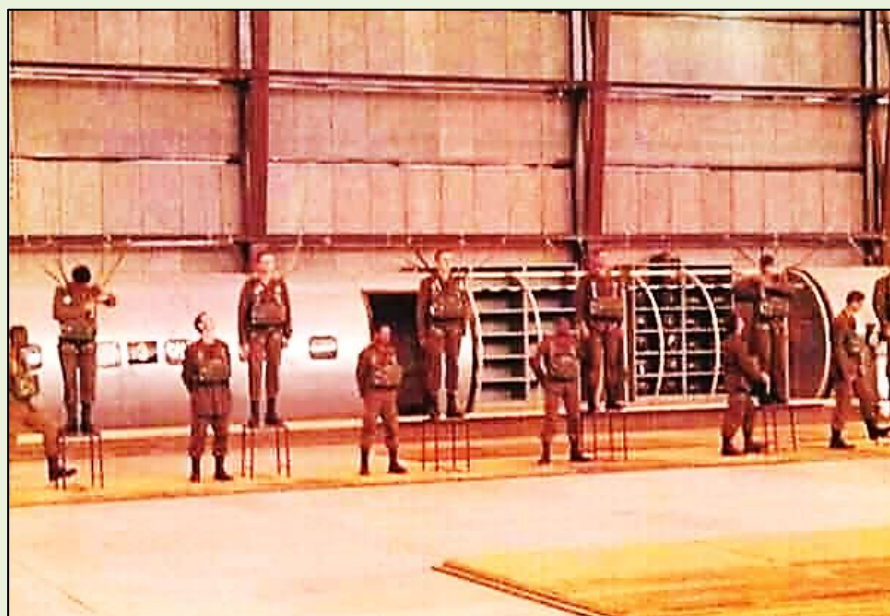
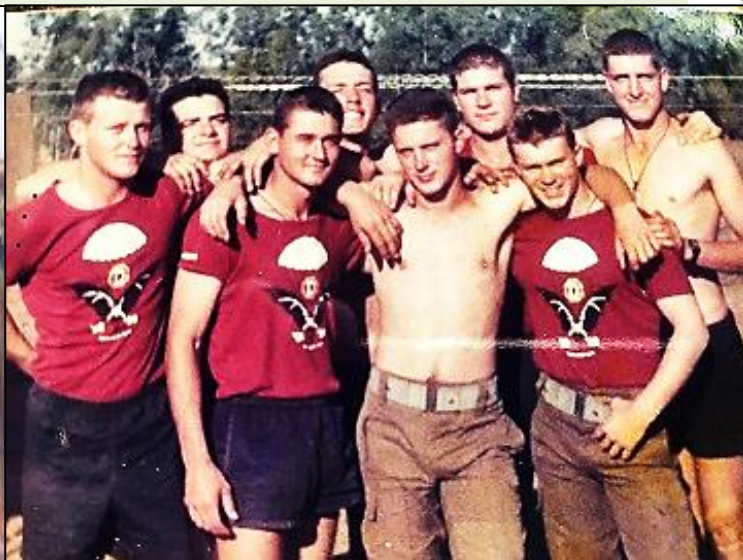




1981 Kersfees op Sodoliet. Manie Troskie. / Regs: Foto van 1964. Walter MPK wapen.



Eben Barlow wat in gedeel was in 44.







**Shai Mulder**  
**Michael Douglas Light**



**Kaas vd Waals**  
**Christo Jonck**



**Johan Rabie**  
**Fires van Vuuren**



**Christo Jonck**



**Brig Jakes Swart**



**Tico Brink.**



24 OCT 1975

## VEREER

SKTR. G. SCHOEMAN (regs) van 1 Valskernbataljon by Bloemfontein word hier deur kol. T. S. de Bruin, offisier in bevel van personeel by Kommandement Oranje-Vrystaat, geluk gewens nadat hy die eerste lid van die Weermag geword het wat die grensdienssertifikaat ontvang. By hulle op die foto is sktr. Schoeman se ouers, mnr. en mev. J. Schoeman van Dinwiddie, Germiston. Sktr. Schoeman het sy linkeroog tydens die laaste deel van sy dienstrydperk van ses maande op die grens in 'n skermutseling met terroriste verloor. Die grensdienssertifikaat word aan alle lede van die Weermag toegeken wat drie maande diens op die grens gedoen het. Sktr. Schoeman kom nou ook in aanmerking vir die Pro Patria-medalje vir die ses maande grensdiens gedoen het, toegeken word.



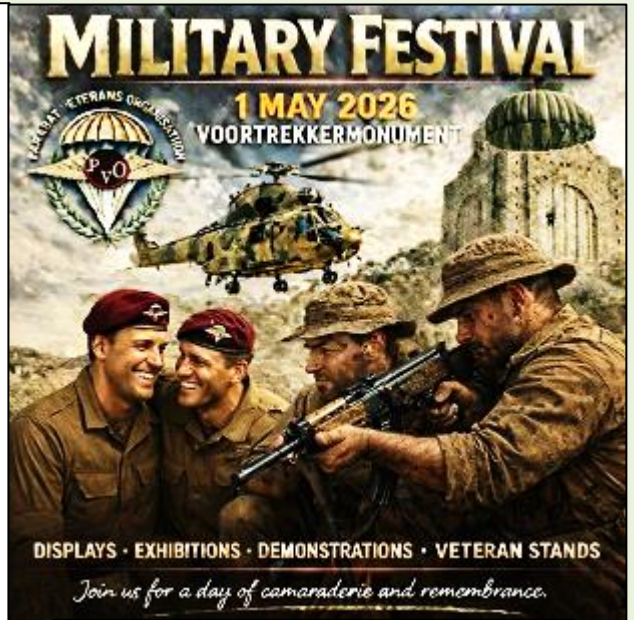


Mass jump at De Brug last year. They were dropped from 2 C-130BZ aircraft.  
Right: Japie Keet and kie. Date unknown.



Generaal Mgwebi.

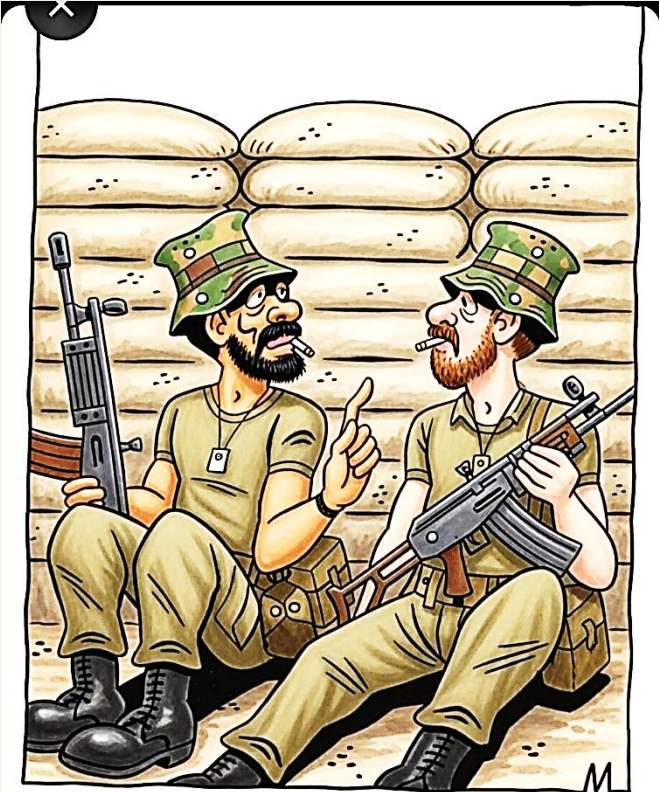
-  Southern Cross Decoration (SD)
-  Southern Cross Medal (1975) (SM)
-  Military Merit Medal (MMM)
-  General Service Medal (South Africa)
-  Military Rule Medal
-  Unitas (Unity) Medal
-  ARTWORK NOT AVAILABLE | Mandela Commemoration Medal (Gold)
-  Medalje vir Troue Diens (Medal for Loyal Service) (30 Year Clasp)
-  Good Service Medal (Silver (20 Years))
-  Faithful Service Medal (10 Years)
-  Transkei Defence Force Medal
-  ARTWORK NOT AVAILABLE | African Union Medal (Intervention in Burundi)
-  United Nations Medal (MONUSCO - DRC (Numeral 1))



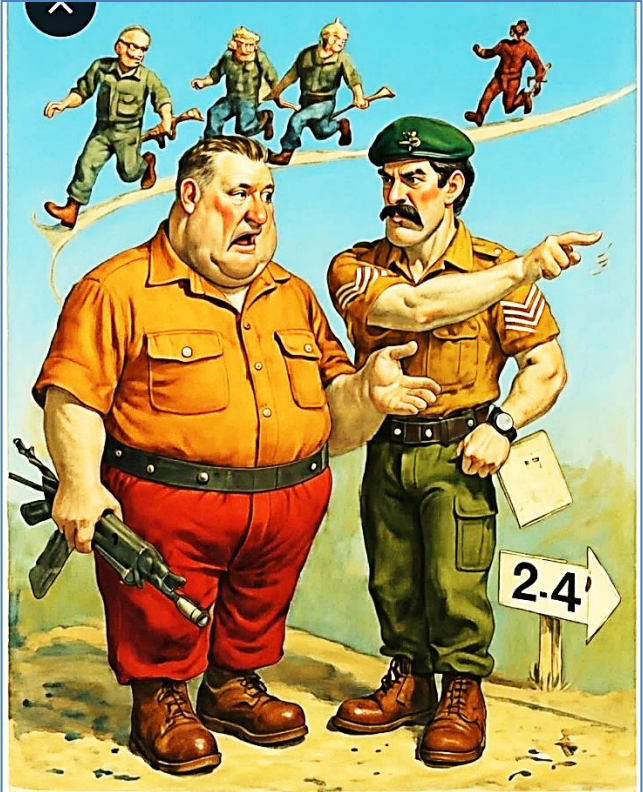
**PRO PATRIA MUSEUM** 60 years VOORTREKKERMONUMENT  
www.propatrimuseum.org.za

*PPM Border War Memorial*  
Commemorating 60 years since the start of the Border War

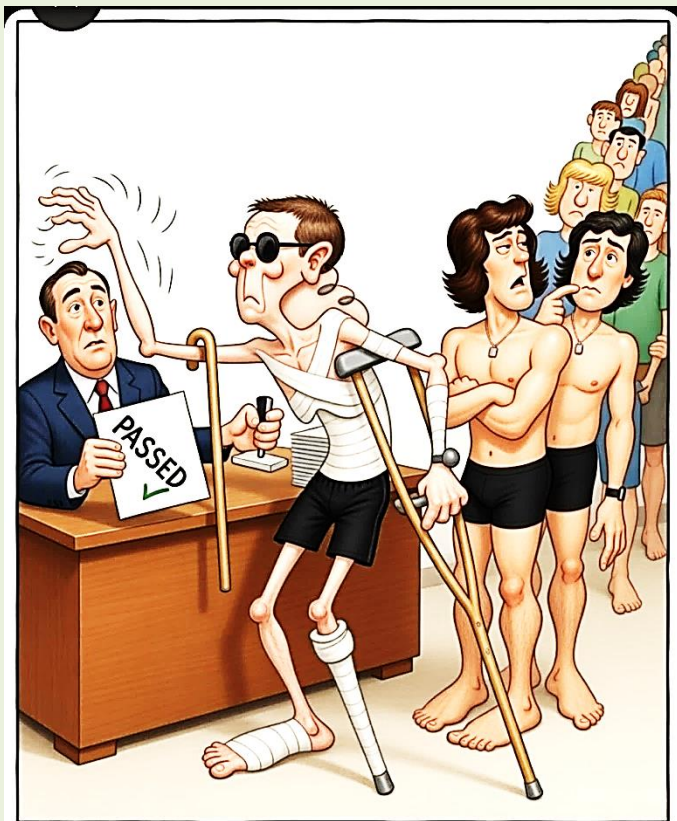
**23 August 2026**  
**Fort Schanskop Amphi,**  
**Voortrekkermonument**  
10h00  
RSVP online by 18 Aug '26



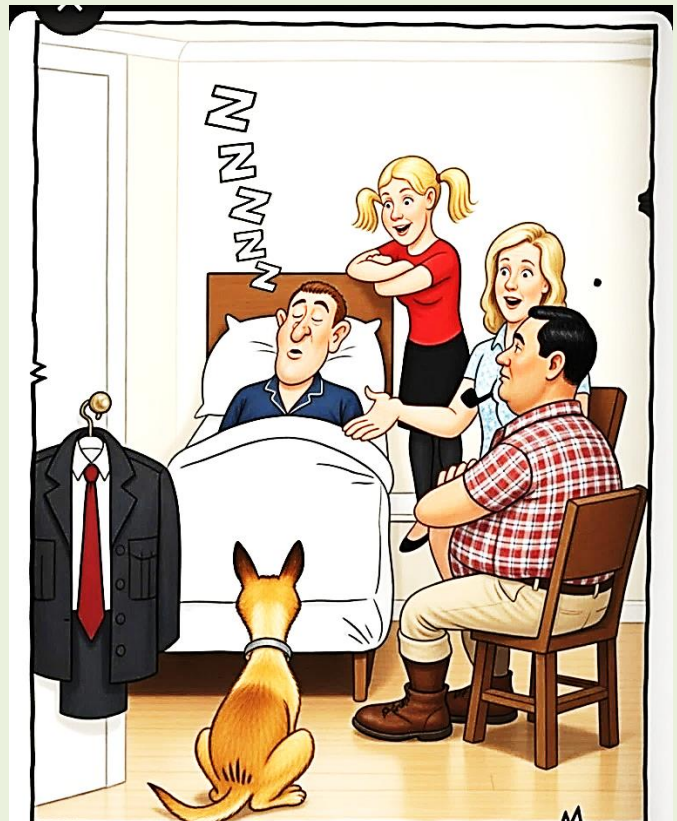
On the border you know you're 'bossies' when you tear off the pull-ring and throw the beer can away thinking it's a hand grenade!



Aag gee, Sarge! You expect me to run the 2,4 in under 12 minutes! Who do you think I am – Zola Budd?



And YOU thought you'd be exempted because of your athlete's foot.



Some first pass home! All he's done is bath, sleep, bath, sleep, bath, sleep!

# HULDEBLYKE / TRIBUTE



## PRETORIA CANOPY BIRTHDAYS

APL	
Johan van Eeden	01
Henk Botha	02
Charles Scalliet	08
Norman Shelley	11
Cecil Rhind	11
Arnoldus vd Westhuisen	16
Lieb Liebenbera	19

MAY	
Chris Kinghorn	12
Kadaf Rossouw	12
Baksteen van Huyssteen	16
Peter Kurten	21
Louis du Plessis	23
Louis Botha	25
Danie Bakker	28

JUN	
Corne Mare	03
Jacobus Kriel	11
Pierre van Rooyen	19

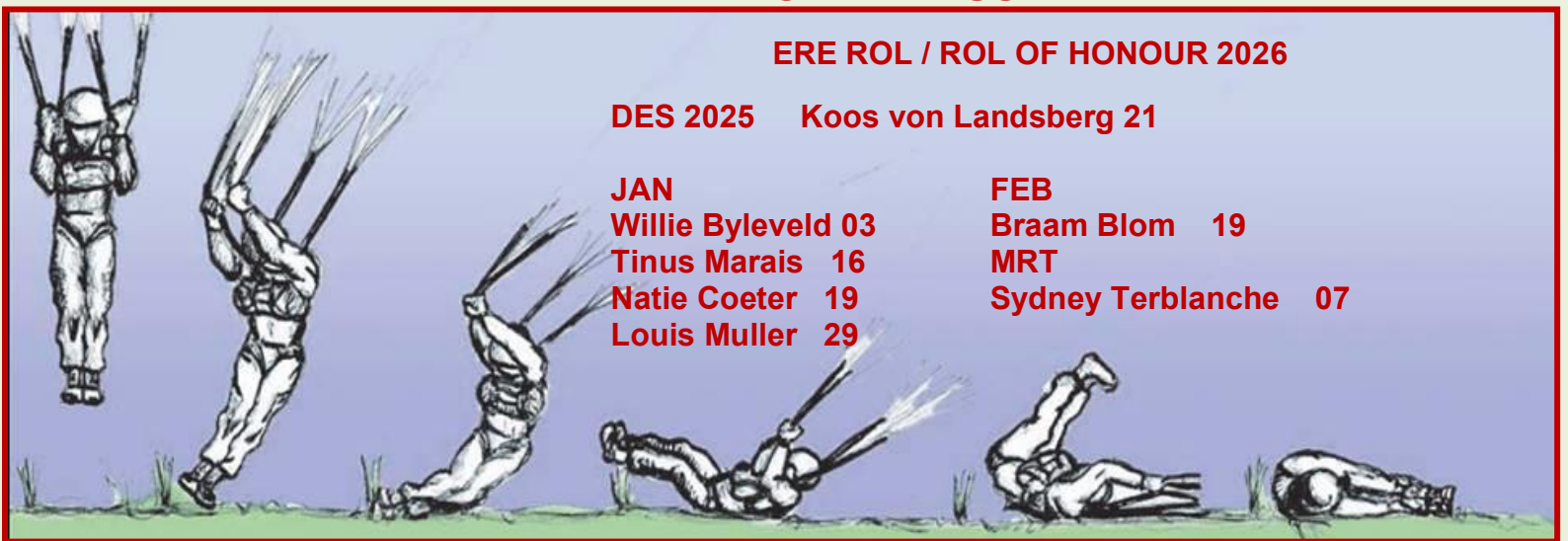
## EX ALTO VINCIMUS

### ERE ROL / ROL OF HONOUR 2026

DES 2025 Koos von Landsberg 21

JAN  
 Willie Byleveld 03  
 Tinus Marais 16  
 Natie Coeter 19  
 Louis Muller 29

FEB  
 Braam Blom 19  
 MRT  
 Sydney Terblanche 07



## WORD FROM THE EDITORS

This is your newsletter. Please make contributions to it in the line of news, personal stories of training or operations, reports on parades attended, as well as any news of bats. The next Bat Chat will be in April 2026 and we need your inset by Apr 20. VASBYT

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 Chris Pohl

[paul@who-els.co.za](mailto:paul@who-els.co.za)  
 Paul J. Els

## EULOGY FOR A WAR VETERAN

Do not stand at my grave and weep.

I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the Gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the mornings hush,

I am the swift uplifting rush

of quiet birds in circled flight,

I am the soft stars that shine at night

Do not stand at my grave and cry,

I am not there, I did not die.

(Unknown Poet)



**EX ALTO VINCIMUS**