

NHOWO

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THE ANNUAL MAGAZINE OF THE RHODESIAN AFRICAN RIFLES REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION



Jeremy Lionel Fisher 8-12-54 to 29-09-77 Never forgotten Remembered with pride

EDITORS

Alan Doyle and John Hopkins

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The Association Committee



Vince Leonard





Pat Lawless



Sean von Stranz



John Hopkins



Alan Doyle



Jo Amos

Keith Adams

Ruth von Stranz

Ron Marillier



CHAIRMAN'S NOTE – Pat Lawless



Dear Association Members,

I cannot 'top' our Padre's inspirational note below except to add that it's at about this time of the year that your Committee too seeks to renew its commitment to our work on your behalf. I have found that while our primary focus remains to

be doing what we can to relieve suffering through welfare activity, I have noted an important and growing emphasis in the direction of 'remembrance'.

So I hope you enjoy Ant Manning's poignant report of their visit to the cave where Lieutenant Jerry Fisher 1RAR was tragically killed in September 1977; underlaying his death is the tale of some brave young RLI soldiers who went to extraordinary lengths to save him – truly inspirational, and especially so at this time of the year. And may I commend Rob Fisher (Jerry's brother) for having the courage to set this all in motion.

Please note our Secretary's offer to join any one of our frequent Committee meetings – we don't claim to have all the answers, and it's refreshing to learn of others.

I hope you have a meaningful and peaceful Easter!

Pat

Pat Lawless, Chairman

PADRE'S NOTE – Ron Marillier



MORE THAN CONQUERERS

More than conquerors! This sounds like the title that most military minded men (and women), would very much like to have attached to their names. It certainly appeals to me!

At Easter, we remember the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on the Cross just outside Jerusalem, 2000 years ago. What had

seemed to His enemies, and even His distraught followers, to be a humiliating defeat of His mission, was completely turned around in His miraculous Resurrection from the dead.

St Paul the Apostle, Himself once a bitter enemy of the Church that Jesus had established, was completely transformed in spirit when he saw the "Light" on the road to Damascus, where he was on his way to persecute the followers of Christ. Paul went on to be arguably the most effective of all the Apostles of Christ, taking the message of Salvation to Asia Minor and Europe, as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

While in Ephesus, Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, ie the Church in Rome. Below are excerpts of his famous passage **"more than conquerors"**, seen in:

Romans CAP 8:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him...... For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might become the firstborn of many brothers.

"And those He called, He also justified, those He justified He also glorified.

"And what shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all ...

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died for us, more than that, was raised to life, is at the right hand of God, and is interceding for us?

"Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

"No, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord". As we look at the dire state of the world in which we live, and our own complacent, decadent society, one can be forgiven for feeling quite depressed. We are all getting older, and with so many of our brothers and sisters falling ill, and many having already passed away in recent times, we all are reminded of our mortality. However, we need not become depressed. If we truly believe in God, we too, can become **"More than Conquerors."**

We, like the heroic St Paul and the other Apostles, and all the heroes of the faith right up to this day, can have supreme confidence that no matter what happens in this world, our great creator God has everything under control, and will destroy all evil.

St Paul, and all Jesus' disciples except John, were cruelly martyred because of their powerful witness. They went to their deaths rejoicing, knowing that they had an eternal future with God. Millions of people have since been martyred for their faith in Christ, even up to this very day. They are all truly **"More than Conquerors"!**

You and I too, can become **"More than Conquerors"!** God is not asking you to be a martyr. All he asks is that you believe and trust in His Son Jesus, who is "the very image of God the Father".

Ron Marillier

Chaplain



SECRETARY'S NOTE - Vince Leonard

Last year, I informed you of the exciting and enthralling role occupied by the secretary and, during the past twelve months it has been my privilege to support the work of the Association by trying to corral the committee and pin them to an agenda. In truth, this is not that difficult and there is usually a full

committee sitting at each meeting, many of which are chaired from various exotic and interesting parts of the world, depending upon the work schedule of the Chair.

During the past year, we have probably met a little more regularly as we were planning the Memorial Event 2023 which, as you will know, took place in August and was a weekend to remember. As secretary, I helped to coordinate and plan the event with the assistance of several unsung heroes and heroines, not least of whom was my wife, Trish, who quality assured my work, much of which was returned for corrections. Otherwise, the business of the committee has driven the agenda, the main foci of which have been the management of property and the looming dissolution of the Association and, of course, the welfare of our veterans, all of which are reported separately, elsewhere in this publication.

We have not departed from our meeting format, which allows opportunity for all committee members to provide updates on particular pieces of work or to table new business. All matters are discussed and agreed or dismissed by majority vote, the casting vote sitting with the Chair.

I have continued to produce minutes of our meetings and maintain an "Action Log", recording the progress of "live" actions and noting when these have been discharged, at which time they are removed from the log. Any and all of these documents are available to you as members, should you ever wish to examine them. It is important to us as a committee and to me as the secretary that we have your trust and confidence as members. To this end I, once again, on behalf of the Chair and committee, extend an invitation to any member who wishes to sit in on a meeting or meetings, at which, you would be very welcome. Incidentally, because we are, geographically, spread far and wide, we continue to meet by means of the "Zoom" platform, so if you did want to join a meeting, please let me know and I will ask the Chair to include you on the invitation list.

I should mention that at every meeting, we keep a space available for "Any Other Business", so, if you cannot stand the thought of listening to your committee rabbit on for an hour or so, there is a capacity for you to table anything that you feel is important and we will try to assist you in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion. This is, after all, your Association and we try to serve your interests, so it helps if we know what is important to you and how you feel we can help you. As I pointed out last year, the whole idea is to ensure transparency and reassure the membership that the committee is working for the best interests of the Association and complying with the principles stated in the constitution.

The last matter I would like to mention is that I continue to have the privilege of working with a dynamic, creative and committed team of people, which means that if a problem or need arises, actions can be generated quickly and impromptu meetings to deal with a single issue have and will be held if necessary. Nevertheless, these are always duly recorded, scrutinised and available to the membership as a means of explaining and justifying any action taken on your behalf.

As always, if you have an item of business, a question or a suggestion that you wish raised at a committee meeting, please do not hesitate to send me an email (leonard.cadmans@btinternet.com) and, if you cannot be with us to present the issue in person, I will raise the matter on your behalf. It remains a privilege and honour to serve you as the Association Secretary.



TREASURY – Ruth von Stranz

Our financial year is the end of March each year. Subscriptions received thus far amount to £339.00, which are down a bit compared to previous years. Reminders have not gone out yet but will be going out within the next week and hopefully that will bring in more on the subscription front.

Once again, we have received some very generous donations amounting to £9226.96. However, of this, £5249.00 has been specifically donated towards an Education fund and the Committee are working on setting this up separately and identifying beneficiaries. A huge thank you to those who have donated. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Book sales are in the region of £132.33 as most books are now available on Amazon. I still have a stock of Chibaya Moyo 1 if anyone would like to purchase a copy. A new stock of Paratrooper prints by the artist John Hopkins are available for sale. Thus far sales have brought in £426.00 and as the prints are

selling fast, this amount will change accordingly. If anyone would like to purchase one of these beautiful prints, please contact Alan Doyle. Grants have been given out in Zimbabwe to the tune of USD\$800.00 with more to go out shortly.

MEMBERSHIP – Sean von Stranz



We have approximately 204 members this year which is up from the previous year, due to new members joining and beneficiaries added. 25 of these members are Life members or Honorary Life members, and 13 are beneficiaries. More beneficiaries will be added shortly.

Annual subscriptions of £10 each should theoretically return £1660.00 per annum. In 2020/21 £731.56 was raised in subscription payments. In 2021/22 £1050.00 was raised and 2022/23 £867.14 was raised. This year to date, £339.21 has thus far been received. However, reminders are going out in the next week and hopefully a little more will come in before the end of the financial year.

We are always open to enquiries for potential new members and would encourage anyone interested in joining us to contact me on rar.uk.subs@gmail.com

BENEVOLENCE – Keith Adams



A great deal of time was taken up last year assisting with organising a trip in mid- August for two veterans, the son of an 1RAR Sergeant KIA in 1979 and myself for a week's visit to the UK to attend a Service at our memorial in the NMA in Staffordshire, and for our veterans to meet members and the committee of the Regimental Association. The visit was a huge

success, very much a once in a lifetime trip for the veterans but also gave them a chance to brief the committee on how the vast majority of our ex-members are really struggling to survive on their meagre pensions, gratuities and the few that are still in employment, salaries. While in London we were invited to meet members of the RCEL who briefed us on their operation and the assistance they give to ex- military members of the Commonwealth that attested before February 1970. While none of our party benefit from RCEL annual grants, they all attested after Feb 1970, it was interesting for them to hear how many countries were involved around the world and what came to Zimbabwe in the form of grants for all our exservicemen. We were also informed that RCEL is not indefinite and that the funds would be exhausted and organisation disbanded in the not too distant future.

In November we had a lightening visit to Zim by our Chairman and while there wasn't enough time to "rally the troops" we were able to attended the Remembrance Service hosted by the British Embassy at the Pioneer cemetery in Mbare, Harare. The CWG site's for African and European servicemen were in pristine condition and the service was well attended by various military attaches, representatives of the Commonwealth and local representatives of the Legion.

We have had a recent boost to our welfare fund which has enabled us to continue our programme of assisting our Masodja who are in need of medical and social assistance. We have approved grants to a further 20 applicants who will receive their grants before March ends. Our sincere thanks to all those who have so generously donated to assisting our old comrades in arms, it is so humbling seeing their gratitude when receiving their grants.

We are also working with other Regimental Associations, particularly those with an RAR connection, to see where we can complement each other with welfare applications, assistance and prioritising those in desperate need.

OPERATION KATUNDU – John Hopkins



On hearing that individuals and units were withdrawing their memorabilia from the collection at Bedford, the Association decided to recover the RAA and RAR memorabilia to ensure that items were properly preserved for posterity.

The new RLI Regimental Committee has given us all possible assistance in recovering our memorabilia and we cannot

thank them enough for all their help. Jug Thornton the RLI Regimental Association Chairman, George Dempster, Shirley Dempster and Mark

Thornton have been outstanding in their support on this issue.

The RAA and RAR Regimental Associations had decided some time ago that there had to be an end date to our activities of remembrance and welfare. As Association members, we are now all getting that much older and gradually falling off our perches, or slowing down. With that in mind a decision has been taken by the committees to wind operations down by 2027. After that date there will be informal events and get togethers.



Of course, preserving memorabilia comes within that remit of remembrance and with that in mind it has been decided to finalize the collection of RAA and RAR memorabilia and to hopefully preserve it in established venues such as affiliated Regiments or a military museum who will cherish these items and if even not displayed will be preserved recorded and available to see online. Many of the Military Museums today show their stored collections online.



The operation to collect RAA RAR the and memorabilia has now been going on for some months since September of last year with numerous trips to Bedford and to our holding location. I cannot thank enough Alan Doyle, George Dempster, Sherley Dempster and Mark Thornton, our Chaiman Pat Lawless and Moira Lawless. Mike Jones and Sharon Jones.

I would also like to thank Steve Kohut and Ieuan Davies, friends of mine in Llanelli, who have also assisted. At our holding

location, Vince Leonard and Trish Leonard with the able assistance of Stewart have done a wonderful job of packing storing and preserving the items. All should be commended for their efforts and a bar added to their Operation Katundu Medal.

AN EXPEDITION INTO THE PAST - Ant Manning

There is an entry in the RAR Roll of Honour:

Lt Jeremy Lionel FISHER	781005	A Coy 1RAR	KIA 29 Sep 1977	Killed aged 22 in a contact. His patrol had discovered CTs holed up in a cave. After efforts to flush them out had failed, Lt Fisher went in but was shot and killed. He was from Mangula. One of RLI men in the fireforce - L/Cpl Russell Phillips, was awarded the SCR for his action in entering the cave to retrieve Fisher. Phillips refused to wear his SCR ribbon at his investiture and was threatened by his OC with being charged for being incorrectly dressed. Phillips said that he could not wear the ribbon because he believed he did not deserve it as he had failed to save Lt Fisher's life.
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The Contact Report, in the manner of such documents, is laconic. There were four sticks involved in this contact. Stops 1 and 2 (L/Cpl Phillips) were provided by Sp Cdo 1RLI, Stop 3 by A Coy 1RAR (Jeremy Fisher) and Stop 4 by B Coy 1RAR. The Fire Force was a substantial formation: two K-cars, three G-Cars, two Lynxes and a Paradak on standby, commanded by Maj Nigel Henson OLM, OC Sp Cdo. The Fire Force was mobilised by a signal from a 'roadrunner' in the Bikita area of Joc Repulse, in conditions of low cloud, drizzle and strong winds.

It took 15 minutes to get an accurate fix on the roadrunner signal. Eventually a kraal line and a rocky outcrop were pinpointed, and a search began. Three running CTs were killed by a combination of ground and arial fire, one trying to escape from a cave. Jeremy Fisher's stick was tasked with clearing the cave.

He threw an HE grenade into the cave and then entered via a hole in the top. He was immediately shot by one of another three CTs in its interior. L/Cpl Phillips immediately entered the cave, shot two CTs with his pistol, and gave covering fire at a third CT while a medic and a trooper removed Jeremy Fisher's body from the cave. Jeremy, still alive, was casevaced.



It was now too late to take further action in the cave itself, so two sticks were left in ambush overnight. The remaining, wounded, CT left the cave, was shot at by both sticks in turn, but effected an escape over the broken ground, taking with him Jeremy's weapon.

Four weapons, documents and the roadrunner were recovered from the area.

In early February this year, Jeremy's brother Rob, accompanied by family and friends, and armed with archive research by Pat Lawless,

revisited the battle site to honour his brother's death.

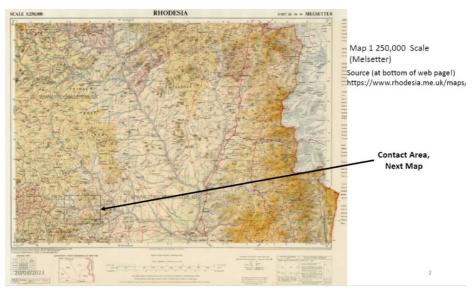
An edited account of the expedition by Ant Manning, a good friend of Rob Fisher, follows:

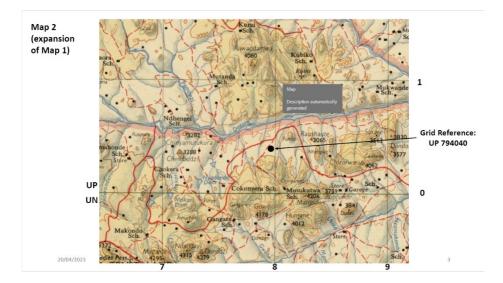
"My dear friend Rob Fisher's brother was killed in action in 1977. Rob felt all these years later it was necessary to honour his brother's death by gathering in his memory. Having obtained amazing detail from Rhodesian war records,



The expedition party: Rob and Roemee Fisher, their daughter Danielle, sons Robert and David, Chris Bishop, Miles Hall, Pete Shepard and Ant Manning.

the locstat of the contact was established, and permission from the chief and headman of the area in Bikita sought. Rob and his wife and children, Chris Bishop, Miles Hall, Pete Shepard and I, accompanied by the headman whose home is at the foot of the hill, climbed the rocky outcrop.



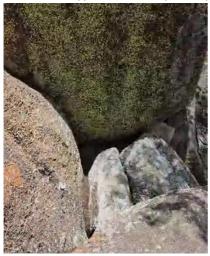


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An elderly woman identified the recess where all this took place. This was extraordinarily confirmed when, using a metal detector we had with us, we found a grenade handle and a metal webbing ring. We laid a plaque mounted in concrete in the cave (see front cover), and held a short memorial service for Jeremy and those of the enemy who died. After a very moving playing of a recording of the last post, we departed with hearts sad and full."



The kopje, with the rocky outcrop at its peak, with the kraal line at its base.



The top entrance to the cave.



The webbing ring and grenade lever found in the cave.

A brief video of the location of Jeremy Fisher's last contact can be found on the RAR YouTube Channel "RAR Association", via the following link:

https://youtube.com/shorts/T0hmrK7wjcc

or on the RAR website masodja.com , in the Historical Material sections

A GREAT WAR SURVIVOR – Alan Doyle

Every now and then, the hours of trawling through scuffed archive boxes and dusty books are rewarded by a "find". It doesn't happen often, but it happened the other day.

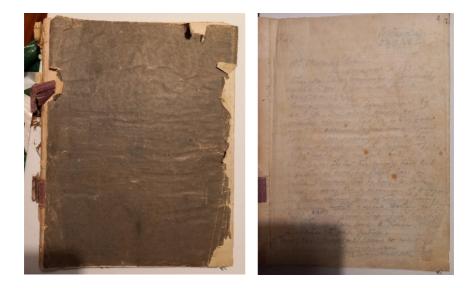
John Hopkins has been involved for some months in tracking down items from his list of RAR and RAA memorabilia. He happened to mention that he could not

locate the whereabouts of the "RNR War Diaries".

The RNR has several commanding officers. Lt Col Alfred James Tomlinson led the regiment from its founding in May 1915 until he was withdrawn on 27 March 1917. Command of the RNR then passed temporarily to Colonel Ronald Ernest Murray, until Lt Col Clive Lancaster Carbutt was appointed CO on 10 April 1917. Carbutt was promoted to Brigade Commander in February 1918, and he was replaced by Major Staley Nettleship Gower Jackson, who remained as temporary CO until Carbutt returned to command the RNR on 4 June 1918, a post he held until the end of the war.

Each of these commanders kept a war diary for the RNR. Tomlinson's is well known, and available in transcript in a number of places. Jackson wrote a concise record of his short term of duty. But Carbutt's diary is fragmentary. (I believe there is a full typescript copy in the NAZ in Harare, but I have never seen it.) As it happens, I have a box on loan from David Heppenstall's collection, labelled "2RNR – CO's DIARY 16 – 9 – 17 to 28 – 3 18.

I had thought that the box only contained photocopies of transcripts of bits and pieces of Carbutt's diary. Until I went through it in answer to John's mention of the subject ...



In between piles of dozens and dozens of photocopied pages, neatly nestled in the middle, was Carbutt's <u>original</u> War Diary (see left and right above). An exercise book of 100 very faded handwritten pages, minus its board covers, and only barely held together with what remains of the binding. The handwriting on some of the delicate and almost translucent pages is impossible to read without a magnifying glass and a strong light. Carbutt would have carried this in a pocket or satchel, writing it up in camp each evening. Thankfully, there is a transcript in the much more legible handwriting of John Hopkins written when he was Adjutant of 1RAR in 1980.

A rare and real find.

REPATRIATION, OR SOME CORNER OF A FOREIGN FIELD? – Alan Doyle

Compare and contrast the two images overleaf. The top one shows the CWGC cemetery at Tilly-sur-Seulles, which holds the graves of, amongst others, men of the 7th Armoured Division, the "Desert Rats", killed in the fighting at Villers Bocage, south of Caen in Normandy, in June 1944. German soldiers killed in the same battle are also buried here. (The grave of my wife's uncle, a young decorated officer in the Rifle Brigade, is in this cemetery.)

The second image shows one of the many Repatriation Ceremonies held for four years in Royal Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire, marking the passing through the town, from RAF Lyneham to Oxford, of the bodies of British war dead from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Both the Wootton Bassett ceremonies (even viewed on video) and a visit to a CWGC war cemetery, are moving experiences. But why the difference: two



cohorts of war dead, a couple of generations apart, one group repatriated, the other buried abroad?

Things have certainly changed over the past 200 years. Lord Nelson's body was repatriated to England from Trafalgar in 1805 in a barrel of brandy. Ten years later, the tens of thousands who died at Waterloo were buried in shallow mass graves, and then, it is now believed, their bones were dug up and sold for use as agricultural fertiliser, or as an ingredient in the industrial processing of sugar beet. This was after battlefield tourists had scoured the site the morning after the battle, removing uniforms and weaponry for sale as souvenirs.

During WWI, things changed. In 1915 the British government banned the exhumation and repatriation of war dead until the war's end, on sanitary grounds. When one officer was exhumed and repatriated in contravention of the ban, the ban was made permanent, on the grounds of equality of treatment.

The restriction was not popular. In the inter-war years an alleged trade in repatriated bodies from Belgium to the Essex coast was discovered by the press. One side of the very public argument was summed up in one newspaper's leader column:

"When wealthy persons are approached to pay for the transport of their war dead home to their family graves they should think first whether they are not rather dishonouring than honouring the dead by removing them from the great family of heroes."

That certainly explains why so many WWI and WWII war dead are buried in vast cemeteries in northern France, which is not very far at all from the English coast. If a WWI casualty in the Middle East, or a WWII casualty in the Far East, cannot be brought home, then neither should those who died in Flanders fields.



The Rangoon Memorial, Taukkyan War Cemetery, north of Yangon. Myanmar

Indeed, that is the policy of the CWGC:

"Repatriation

Commonwealth war dead who died overseas are not repatriated to their home country, in accordance with the following principles:

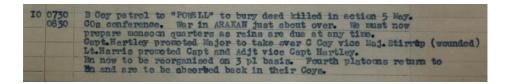
- equality of treatment;
- those who fell together are united with their comrades in death as in life;
- the ideals of common purpose, cause and sacrifice are best represented by the cemeteries established in foreign lands; and
- preservation of the spirit of unity in which the countries gifted land in perpetuity and agreed to adopt the war dead.

Non-Commonwealth war dead may be repatriated at the request of the relevant government."

The CWGC's remit is only for the military dead of WWI and WWII, but the same principle applied after the end of WWII for British and Commonwealth

soldiers. That explains not only why the RAR men who died in Burma are still buried where they died (although their names are all engraved on the central Burma campaign memorial outside Yangon), but also explains why those RAR men who died in the Malaya Emergency are buried in a cemetery in Singapore.

(As an aside, the RAR War Diaries show that four RAR men who died in fighting in the Arakan on 5 May were only properly buried -at the battle site - five days later when a burial party was sent back.)



So far, so easily explained. The British policy on repatriation remained unchanged, it seems, until the end of the Falklands War, when the family of one of the British dead requested that his body be repatriated. Other families followed suit. It was then decided by the government that repatriation should be offered as an option to every family. Many took up the offer, although, of the 255 British servicemen killed in the Falklands, sixteen are buried there. This policy of repatriation has now become routine.

So, what about RAR men killed in action. While still serving as Commonwealth soldiers up until 1965, they would have been governed by British and Commonwealth policy, and would have been buried in the country in which they died, or one near by. As well as those who died in Malaya, there is also an RAR soldier buried in Egypt. He died during the RAR's service in the Canal Zone in Suez in 1952.

But politics and the bush war changed all that. It seems that Selous Scouts recruits were explicitly told that their bodies would be repatriated, no matter where they died. There is no evidence that RAR soldiers were given the same explicit promise, but it seems that the practice was for repatriation, where possible. I cannot find any evidence of the bodies of any RAR men being "left

behind" on external operations (not that there would have been many in the first place), but it did happen with other units: the 14 RLI men who died in Puma 164 are still buried at the crash site near Mapai, and RhAF aircrew remain in the wreckage of their aircraft shot down elsewhere outside Zimbabwe. Their bodies could not be returned for the obvious practical reasons.

After Independence, the bodies of ZDF men, killed in the expeditionary interventions in Mozambique and the DRC, were routinely returned home, though there were no public commemorations along the lines of those at Royal Wooton Bassett, particularly for the Congo war, which was extremely controversial back home in Zimbabwe.

So, the practices of the two militaries, once joint, and then separated by politics and history, evolved in parallel to the same conclusion. But RNR and RAR men (and those other soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought in other units) are nevertheless buried all over the world. To see where the RNR and RAR names are recorded, have a look at the 2023 Memorial Edition of Induna's Bleatings, which can be found at masodja.com, towards the bottom of the page titled "NHOWO, INDUNA'S BLEATINGS, ETC".

Sources

Dissertation abstract by Laura Tradii of the University of Oxford on the subject on war dead commemoration.

COMMEMORATIONS POLICY: Caring for War Dead and our Graves, 25 August 2020, CWGC.

Many thanks for the assistance given by Jacob M.

2RAR SHIELD



During Operation Katunda, this 2RAR shield has come to light. Many thanks to all those former 2RAR officers who filled in some of the history behind this shield, and have confirmed that it was on display in the 2RAR Officers' Mess in the former hotel in Fort Victoria. But does anyone know who brought it to the UK, and how it ended up in the museum in Bedford? And did it travel with the two spears, evidence of the fittings for which can be seen on the back?



We still have copies available of the Limited Edition of 50 of "The RAR Paratrooper", the painting by John Hopkins.

These A3 format fine quality prints are individually numbered and signed by the artist, and accompanied by a certificate of authenticity.

£35 + p&p. All proceeds to the RAR Benevolence Programme

Please contact Alan Doyle on masodjarar@gmail.com .

