

# Vale

## NOTICAS

### ED FOUCHE BCR

Dear Member / Friend

TRIBUTE: EDDIE FOUCHE: 24th January 2013

Ed Fouché came from Northern Rhodesia from where he was sent to board at Kimberley Boys High, returning for a short while to farm in Northern Rhodesia, before joining the RLI in its formative years at Brady Barracks in 1962.

I first met Ed in the RLI in the late 1960s. We served together in the same troop for a time. And for the bulk of his military career Ed was an absolute stalwart and a legend in the RLI; where he served with distinction as both a fighting man and an instructor for so many years. While a fighting man, he was awarded the BCR for gallantry and leadership in action. As an instructor he taught tactics, drill and weapons where he was an acknowledged master in these arts.

He went on to become an instructor at the School of Infantry, imparting his superb knowledge and skills onto his students there from all over the Army. He later attended an officers' course and was commissioned into the RAR, where he was again a fighting man, attaining the rank of Captain. He left the Rhodesian Army in 1980.

He came to South Africa and joined the SADF, retiring as a Major. He then joined Ron Reid-Daly's task force contracted to the Transkei Defence Force. Following this he spent many years in management roles in the Security business.

Ed passed away last week, still working; after a very long illness, about which he never complained although he has been in continuous pain and discomfort for many years. That is the measure of this fantastic man.

There have been numerous wonderful tributes sent in and comments made about Ed. Too many to read out here. But here are a few extracts: Ed was, as everyone is aware, an incredible man, gentleman, soldier of repute and we have always held Ed in the highest regard. I last saw Ed at the latest Selous Scouts reunion and although he appeared slightly off colour, he still maintained that great sense of humour and - above all - the utmost respect from those that knew him. A great man.

He was a skilled marksman - with the rifle, the machine gun and the pistol. He was an indispensable member of the RLI Shooting Team. He was a good team player, a good soldier and a good companion to have around one on this Life's Path.

He was a great soldier. He was a very good shot. He was always very professional and nothing was too much trouble when the call for assistance was needed. A great man who will be missed.

A real hard and tough soldier.

Ed was also an important part of our team. Thanks and cheers, soldier.

He displayed determination, impartiality and superb command of the Drill Instructors' craft. I learned a lot from Eddie – including how to handle men and the important elements of instructional technique. Thanks Ed!

I know I speak for many former Rhodesians when I say Ed changed our lives immeasurably for the better and we are all forever indebted to him. He took us into the 'school of hard knocks' and quickly showed us what being a soldier and a patriot was all about but he did it with care and well disguised affection which only showed when the job was done.

Ed was the soldier's soldier, a fine gentleman and a true comrade. I feel a sad loss at his passing. To me he was the most respected person in the RLI, my hero.

He was a unique soldier who was respected by all

Undoubtedly one of Rhodesia's best and bravest soldiers, and such a nice guy too. Please note also that while his parent unit was indeed the RLI, he was actually commissioned into the RAR. I know from personal experience that these proud men struggled to have the privilege of serving under, and being lead by him.

I know he'll be missed by the men and many good mates who served with him and held him in great respect.

Ed was a great man. A fearless leader and his men loved him. He was a man of great intellect and intuition, which he passed on to all who served with him. He was greatly respected in the unit by all ranks. The common thread in all of these tributes, plus the many comments I have heard from people since Ed's passing is:

What a great man he was.

His leadership qualities. His men loved him and loved serving under him. They felt safe when he led them in battle. He led from the front as I will illustrate shortly.

His no-nonsense approach.

His compassion beneath his seemingly tough exterior.

His humility. Ed never bragged. He knew his place in life and played the part superbly and very genuinely. As Rudyard Kipling said in his poem "IF": Ed could "talk with crowds and keep his virtue"; and: "walk with kings, nor lose the common touch". I believe that these are the characteristics of a great leader.

His authenticity. (What you saw is what you got from Ed Fouché).

His intuition about people, his men and what the enemy would do. (This skill was palpably manifested on operations). I often thought how glad I was to be fighting on Ed's side!

His incredible honed military, bush craft and tracking skills.

His intellect and savvy. Ed was an extremely smart and intelligent man and he shared this gift with all of us.

His bravery in action. Forgive me for telling war stories but here is an extract from Ed's BCR citation: For gallantry and leadership in action. Colour Sergeant Fouché, then a Sergeant and acting as troop commander, has had 13 successful engagements with the terrorists, invariably brought about by his initiative and military skill. In one encounter he personally shot and killed a terrorist at close range, then, exchanging his rifle for a machine gun and moving to a better position, engaged the remaining terrorists, wounding two. His skilful tracking ability, on another occasion enabled his troop to close with and surprise a group of terrorists, three of whom were killed, two personally by Sergeant Fouché. Having established a night ambush on his own initiative with four men, they successfully accounted for three of a group of terrorists who entered the ambush. His personal conduct, devotion to duty and disregard for his own safety, has set an example which has been an inspiration to not only the men under his command, but those serving in his unit.

Moving on briefly; Ed was acknowledged as one of the finest shots in the Army with the rifle, machine gun and pistol. He represented the combined Army, Air Force and Police shooting team on many occasions. And he used these shooting skills to great effect in battle, as we heard in his citation. He was acknowledged to be the first man to master the art of firing a single round from an MAG machine gun. Those who know about this weapon will know what an incredibly difficult feat this is. He had that same gentle touch with weapons as he had with people, when needed, while leading his men.

Apart from his military skills, Ed was a master inland fisherman. Probably one of the few men other than that famous man who caught fish in waters where there were supposedly none. I wish that I had spent more time leaning from Ed about fishing. But he wasn't always a perfect fisherman. Let me tell you a short story about this. [The story is about Ed blowing up fish in a pan in the Zambezi valley with plastic explosive that floated instead of sinking when thrown in, causing a thunderous explosion which must have reverberated through the whole valley. And I had the unenviable task of trying to convince our OC on the radio that we were also baffled by the explosion which was somewhere in our Troop's base camp vicinity.]

Finally, equal to Ed's leadership skills, courage, intellect, shooting and fishing skills, he was a true master of the art of consuming a small glass of cane with a tiny dash of coke from time to time – and he has never changed his favourite tippie for as long as I have known him.

Ed Fouché was a wonderful man, soldier and friend and I am privileged to have known and to have served with him and I will miss him greatly. Our thoughts go out to you: Dawn, Vic, Eddie, Kim, Tracy, Simoné and family at this sad time. May he rest in peace now, after his crippling illness so bravely and silently borne. Farewell Ed!

Pat Armstrong

#### BCR CITATION

Colour Sergeant Edward George Fouché (2 Commando, 1RLI)

For gallantry and leadership in action. During anti-terrorist operations in the north eastern border area, Colour Sergeant Fouché, then a Sergeant and acting as troop commander, has had 13 successful engagements with the terrorists, invariably brought about by his initiative and military skill. In one encounter he personally shot and killed a terrorist at close range, then, exchanging his rifle for a machine gun and moving to a better position, engaged the

remaining terrorists, wounding two. His skilful tracking ability, on another occasion enabled his troop to close with and surprise a group of terrorists, three of whom were killed, two personally by Sergeant Fouché. Having established a night ambush on his own initiative with four men, they successfully accounted for three of a group of terrorists who entered the ambush. Colour Sergeant Fouché has continually shown great determination and a high standard of personal aggressive leadership in action. His personal conduct, devotion to duty and disregard for his own safety, has set an example which has been an inspiration to not only the men under his command, but those serving in his unit.

Date of award: 13 September 1974

We stand alone, and yet as one  
In the fading light of a setting sun  
We've all gathered to say goodbye  
To our fallen comrade who's set to fly  
The eulogy's read about their life  
Sometimes with words from pals or wife  
We all know when the Co's done  
What kind of soldier they'd become  
The padre then calls us all to pray  
The bugler has Last Post to play  
The cannon roars and belches flame  
we will recall, with pride, their name  
A minute's silence stood in place  
as tears roll down the hardest face  
Deafening silence fills the air  
with each of us in personal prayer

Andrew McFarlane

Please extend my best wishes to Ed's family. I can not get to Jo'burg as I stay in Gordon's Bay.

I was thinking of Ed recently when I saw his picture in the new RLI book.

Ed was my training Sergeant in training troop in 1974 (intake 136), and then when we passed out he was my first stick leader in the bush in 2 Cdo, 7 troop, leading us through our first night patrol, OP and ambushes. I had to set his sleeping bag at night with a little hole for his hip. I was tasked with making his tea during breaks, just the way he liked it. Ed was the soldier's soldier, a fine gentleman and a true comrade. I feel a sad loss at his passing. To me he was the most respected person in the RLI, my hero.

Rest well Ed (Patches), no need to fight anymore.

Regards

Jo' (88553 Rfn van Tonder A.J.)

Hi Bill & Tom,

Thanks for letting me know about Ed, very sad about his passing. He was a great soldier, had a long association with him in the RLI, when I first joined as a recruit he was one of my Instructors and then at times when I was on call outs doing follow-ups / tracking I was

attached a number of times to 2 Commando, where Ed was a Troop Sergeant. He was a very good shot, went with him to Cleveland Range many times to compete in the various shoots. Also met up with him on occasions when he was with the RAR.

Ed was also with us in the Transkei Army / School Of Infantry, he was the Captain in charge, always very professional and nothing was to much trouble when the call for assistance was needed.

It was always great to see Ed at both the RLI & Selous Scouts functions, a great man and will be missed. Please pass on condolences Dawn and family.

Best  
John Ash

Regards,