

Vale

NOTICAS

PIETER (BOET) BOTHA

Dear Member / Friend

It is with regret that we inform you that Pieter Willem (Boet) Botha passed away from a heart attack on the 22 September 2013.

Boet served in the RLI from 1969 to 1979. While serving in Support Commando Boet lost both his legs in a landmine incident on 23 December 1972 while his Callsign responding to the Whistlefield Farm attack. (*Read below for a report on the Whistlefield Farm Attack). Boet continued to serve after his convalescence as an armourer until the end of his service.

Boet is survived by his wife Isabel, six children and seven grandchildren.

The Association extends our sincere condolences to Isabel and all the family and the friends of Boet.

Billy Wiggill CEO

"It's so difficult to let you go Though death's left us no other choice We're mourning the loss of never seeing you again Of never hearing your precious voice It seems that in life there are certain times Which are more than "simply unfair" When our hearts search out for better answers But cannot seem to find them there And such is the case at your passing Contemplating the briefness of your life All the great things that you still would have done If you'd been granted a little more time It isn't difficult to envision the possibilities For look at what you'd already done..."

Whistlefield Farm Attack – Short Report

While the security forces were patrolling around Altena, Nhongo's men approached Whistlefield Farm in the late evening of 22 December and, as at Altena, attacked the farm house with rifle fire, grenades and an RPG-7 rocket launcher, which was aimed into the bedroom in which de Borchgrave was sleeping. The rocket hit the window frame and lightly wounded the tobacco farmer and his nine-year-old daughter Anne. The ZANLA cadres then retreated and hid themselves. News of the second attack reached Buttenshaw and Sachse around midnight, and they deployed immediately, but having discovered a mine near Altena they disembarked from the vehicles 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) from Whistlefield and made the final approach on foot. Anne was evacuated by helicopter as the RLI and SAS men secured the area for the night.

The next morning, on 24 December 1972, two tracking teams arrived at Whistlefield to assist Buttenshaw and Sachse in a 360-degree search: one was from the SAS, and led by Ron Marillier, while the other was a British South Africa Police (BSAP) team including tracking dogs. The security forces searched for tracks while also investigating reported sightings. The tracks of the ZANLA fighters were discovered on 27 December on the western side of the farm

and the trackers asked Buttenshaw and Sachse to bring the vehicles carrying the heavy equipment around to meet them. On the way the truck carrying Buttenshaw ran over a mine with one of its rear wheels, causing it to detonate. Buttenshaw himself, who was sitting on the bonnet of the vehicle, was thrown clear but Corporal Norman Moore and Trooper Pete Botha, sitting in the back, were not so lucky, taking the brunt of the blast. Captain Gordon Holloway, behind the wheel, and Trooper Rod Boden in the passenger seat went into severe shock but were ultimately unharmed. Moore, on the other hand, died two days later from his wounds, while Botha survived but lost both legs.