

Dewald Hattingh 201 Battalion (Bushmen Battalion) 17/04/08  
 Missing Voices Project Interviewed by Mike Cadman

	TAPE ONE SIDE A
Interviewer	Give me a bit of a background about where you grew up, how big was your family, things like that.
Dewald	I grew up in Cape Town, born in Cape Town in 1959. I was part of a family of 8. A little brother called Emile died at age of 14 with cancer. My father made a turn in East London came back and I wrote matric in 1977 in Cape Town, Zwaanswyk High School.
Interviewer	And during your school years did you have any idea what you wanted to do when you finished school?
Dewald	I was in a school called Zwaanswyk High School, they were for 18 years the champions of the cadet department...South African champions with cadets. And it was like a military school and we had our hair cut by the military and we had our boots and everything issued by the military with our cadet competitions. And that planted the seed for me to start liking the military at that stage. And then I was drafted to 11 Commando in Kimberley in the June intake, and my father just saw that I will never make...for six months on my own, and wanted to get me off the streets as quickly as possible, and actually dragged me to the Castle to sign in as a Permanent Force member. I had to choose between what corps I wanted to go to. And that stage I opted for the infantry, at infantry school as an infantry school instructor. What struck me the day I was there, there were many recruitment officers there and the infantry sergeant, who did the presentation to us, was the best looking and I actually liked the way he dressed and the way he presented the infantry. And I decided there and then that ok, fine, I'll go to Infantry School as a Permanent Force instructor. And that started in January 1978.
Interviewer	So you then went through, the first phase of your training would have lasted what, about a year?
Dewald	First phases of training was many phases in this year. When you finish the infantry school in those years you become first of all a lance jack, and then a corporal, a full instructor. It took one year exactly to finish the training course, yes, as an instructor. And then we had six choices to put down and obviously my first choices was around Cape Town and surrounding areas and different battalions, and for some reason the army sent me to Jozini military base in northern Zululand. And we were six...at that stage, we were six infantry instructors newly qualified to go to Jozini military base in Zululand.
Interviewer	Were you involved with old Colonel Louis Heap and the training of 121 Battalion there?
Dewald	Colonel Louis Heap was my officer commanding and actually the

	<p>first day we got there gave me a slasher to clean up a place where the grass grew like sugar reed, and just to tell us that you can now be full instructors but you're still under my command. He's a very charismatic figure, Colonel Louis Heap. We loved him very much and he loved our corporals as well. It's the first time he had instructors in his base. And then we were...I must first tell you that we were involved in training of commandoes, the civilian force training, and we were actually, you can say, the infantry school of the Citizen Force in Jozini. And we trained the guys like they did in...it's next to the game reserve in Namibia.</p>
Interviewer	Next door to Etosha? Oshivelo?
Dewald	<p>Oshivelo base. Normally a few battalions went to Oshivelo for training and evaluation before they went into the Bush War. Whereby these guys before they got deployed to operations they came to Jozini for training. And that's what I did for, and presented also courses to them, sergeant courses and platoon commander courses. Platoon sergeant and platoon commander's courses. And then we were called upon by Colonel Louis Heap to go and do the recruitment for 121 Battalion. The first recruitment of 121 Battalion. Now they had four bungalows in the corner at the Jozini dam wall, I think it's an old school, it's still there today. And I was the company sergeant major as a corporal of a company, and a guy called Charlie French was the company sergeant major of the other company. Bravo Company. We had two companies. And we actually went into the veld into Ingwavuma, into Muzi, and into Kosi Bay, and into Ndumo, and many other places, Mbazwane, to recruit these guys from. And actually received thousands of entries. And we were tasked to make the group a little smaller, so we actually just went around and took them in the mornings and really went through fairly afkak phases with them, running up and down the dam wall – now that's a huge dam wall, and those steps you know, and the fifth time you go up the steps then you have about fifty guys that falls out, no this is not for them. So we had to sift them out and to get actually the best. I think we could only take two companies of, I'm not so sure, but I think it was a limit of 600 we had recruited then. 300 in a company. That's where I can actually say I'm a founder member of the battalion. Basyan also killed in action and Charlie French also killed in action. And Loki de Beer is the other guy that was part of that group there. Louis Heap was obviously Jozini's commander, but he was also the battalion commander of the 121 Battalion. I can still remember him, he had an old soccer field where we had our battalion parades in and he addressed the parade in Zulu. Speaks Zulu fluently. That's what I can say about that battalion. Well later on they left for Mtubatuba. But the first two years we were here at Jozini. Somewhere I've got an insignia of that, it's a leopard head, was the first insignia.</p>
Interviewer	Ok, so you spent two years up there at Jozini. And at that stage the military, was it what you had expected, what you actually...did you realise that this is for you? This is the right

	career?
Dewald	<p>You know, to be quite honest I thought the way that my father forced me into the army, and it was told to me that after four years I can buy myself out for a hundred bucks or something, that I'm going to do that, and then I'm going to go civilian. I started liking the army too much by then, and my group of friends were excellent, the soldier life was excellent. We were taught many things by our superiors, which just fit into my lifestyle, and I really loved it. And that four years they came and went and I just excelled from there onwards. So yes, at that stage I loved the army very much. We did a lot of things...only thing that I didn't like about that place is because Colonel Heap didn't have any instructors, we asked to go to the Recces, we asked to go to the parabats, everywhere, he just tears it up in front of you, you're not allowed to go because he knows he's going to battle to get other instructors. He didn't want us to go. And we could never go to the border. We had that Muzi border on the northern side. But we had one incident of one corporal killed there, Corporal van Wyk...maybe I must make a separate story about that, because it's quite a bit of history into that killing there as well.</p>
Interviewer	Tell me about it?
Dewald	<p>We used to have an operational base right at Muzi, just south of Muzi, there's a...nowadays I see they've proclaimed it as a game reserve. Those days it was elephants walking wild there. It's the only place in South Africa animals run wild around there. And I think it's called the Tembe Game reserve now. I don't think if they've fenced it, I don't know...</p>
Interviewer	<p>They have fenced it because there's a big population [of people] now at Mangusi and the area. It's much bigger than in your day. So they have got a fence across the southern boundary. But they [the elephants] do go back and forth into Mozambique all the time.</p>
Dewald	<p>Those years it wasn't...there was no tar roads and stuff like that. And I can actually...I think I must tell you about how...when I left 121 Battalion we became part of a training team training game rangers in five different game reserves. So we were two training teams, each one had a Unimog, and we consisted out of a lieutenant, a sergeant and two corporals. That was the group normally formed. And the game reserves we did were Kosi Bay, Sodwana, Ndumo, Mkuzi, and the one next to Vryheid, Ithala. Those were the five game...and we did normal basic training to these game guards and then later on went into advanced phase whereby we did COIN rural training with them: how to set up ambushes and temporary bases and stuff like that. And actually they became excellent marksmen and they participated in the Bisley competitions those guys. We taught them well, it was a really great experience, and sometimes we had two teams going there. One team would on program not be busy for two days and then we went to watch the game, especially in Mkuzi Game</p>

Reserve you got horses, and they gave us these horses, and we rode through these places and stuff like that. So that was in between and then also sometimes the other regiments, the civilian force regiments, mostly from the Natal area, came and deployed in that area as an operational area. They also received danger pay. There was a certain road that went up, I can't remember the road's name, but above that you were classified the same as you go above the red line in Namibia. So you received danger pay there as well. And there was a base formed in Mkuzi, in that game reserve, in Tembe game reserve. A beautiful base with a bar and everything. These regiments they just did a lot of trouble to (*inaudible*) the infrastructure out and everything. And they physically operated patrols from there onwards. And I was deployed there many times as a platoon leader, although I was a corporal at that stage. So we sometimes did evaluation in the bush, that's why we mostly got deployed there. So these guys deploy, we walk with them for 3 or 4 or 5 days, see how they set up the temporary bases and evaluate them, and actually give them a point at the end of the day in a real time, in 'real war situation', you can in inverted commas say. So we at that stage gave them an exercise, map reading exercise. It was close to Kosi Bay. And then they went and navigated towards a point on the map. Now the map, I can't remember the year of that map, but it was about ten years old the map at that stage. And they navigated to a certain point with compass bearings and everything according to the book, and they eventually got to that point, but it was the wrong point. It was about four kms inside Mozambique already. And because of...the coast line constantly changes, you can actually never draw the map according...in a year's time that thing has changed, there was a storm and there's no more rocks here, the rocks is now on that side. So they thought that they were right and they were wrong. But as they approached there on the beach towards this piece of rock going into the sea...Frelimo saw them...the patrols...and there was...it's actually on the edge of Ponto d'Oro...but if you know the area, the dunes goes up and there's palm trees right on the top there, and they were lying on the top in an ambush position. So as these guys realised, but this doesn't feel right, they have to turn around, they turned around and started moving south again, and they opened fire in an ambush position on them. And they actually shot Corporal van Wyk, killed him, and it wasn't only...I can't remember the other guy's name, there was another guy killed if I'm not mistaken, I can't remember that well, but that platoon saw...actually it was a section...the last the section saw what's happening here...they did fire a movement on the beach to just get out of there, the group was cut in two by van Wyk and another guy into those rocks and they were bayoneted, they say, they told us in a *verklaarings* afterwards, that they were bayoneted inside those rocks there. And we had to withdraw immediately, there were a lot of firing, and the guys did well by not losing more people because they had the advantage of everything, and that firing movement, kept

	<p>their heads low, did well to get out of there. Onto the Kosi Mouth and then inwards they were picked up by vehicles and they came back. And it was a hell of a diplomatic thing to get the body back of van Wyk. I think it's only van Wyk, I'm not so sure anymore. But anyhow that was in '79. Then we had to go and put up a board there. There was a decision made that a sign must be put up to clearly indicate where the border is. And I was there and Basjan van Deventer who was killed in action was there, and we formed...at the Kosi Bay, at one of those houses we had a mortar deployed and everything and we had the group of troops that came in, they just had to carry the sand, the cement, everything they had to carry – can't use the sea sand to build – and they walked around through the mouth and then up north again. And we also brought some civilian that did the measurements, the exact measurements of where this border is supposed to be, and that board was erected there. And we stayed behind, me and Basjan stayed behind to man the radios to them, and if they get any problems we would have just mortared them to try and help them with indirect fire. And I can still remember that while we were waiting there, there was a whole shoal of mullets coming in the water, you could just hear them, big ones man, it's about two footers. So Basjan was in the water and said please just stand by, and I took a hand grenade and I threw it in the water and it exploded. But before that we saw a black guy across that on the other side of the mouth and he had those small things they swim with, those glasses they swim with...</p>
Interviewer	Those small goggles.
Dewald	<p>Yes, and a spear, and it took him...we watched him with the binoculars and I couldn't believe how dedicated this guy was. Took him about three days before he got quite a small fish on that spear of his. So he saw the commotion going on and then suddenly these fish started drifting upwards. Penses gebaars. So Basjan just took these fish and started throwing them onto the side, it was grass on the side, threw them onto the side and this guy came running, it was low water, the water almost disappeared, it's just one sand bank. So he came running over and Basjan said to me, give me your spear, we could all speak Zulu that time...that's another story about Louis Heap, he forced us to speak Zulu as well. We had to go for classes to a nun...and I'll tell you about that just now. And Basjan went down and he put about ten of these things onto the spear and came up with it, and that guy just couldn't believe what we're doing. And he ran off with that fish, and we never saw that because quite far around the corner there our platoon were coming back, the building platoon were coming back, and they saw this guy with all the fish and they bought the fish from him. And we had about 60 more lying here. <i>laughs</i> Anyhow, so that's how it ended and actually me and Lokie de Beer were instructed by Colonel Heap to drive to 5SAI in Ladysmith – through the night we drove – to go and fetch rocket launchers, the ADA type, the ones that burns your eyebrows and hits you open here on...</p>

Interviewer	That's the old fashioned thing that I'd call a bazookas, it's styled on the bazooka.
Dewald	<p>You can say it's a bazooka but we had a name for it, I think it's a number 88. Later on the 89 were the disposable ones. So those ones were still a pukka 88. And got wires, you attach wires, you put the bomb at the back and stuff like that. Because there was the threat of armoured cars, because of this contact that actually they were very aggressive these Mozambican guys and started looking for incidents over the border line, and we had nothing to protect ourselves in that line. We didn't have RPGs and that stuff in those years, so we had to go to the infantry battalion and we were packed, I can't remember, about 20 of this stuff we brought back in a Garrie, all packed into crates and stuff. And brought them back to Jozini, and they were issued to the regiment that was there. And the platoon started becoming much more...in actual fact, I think another one or two commando units joined up there and we had to get more tents and everything, so the whole situation became quite tense and grew in size. Then they continued doing a little bit more densely patrols, foot patrols, in those areas and stuff like that. each were issued one of those 88s. And then it became a little bit more serious, the guys took it much more serious then. Because it was a jolly patrol in the past and actually not very...well nothing went on until that incident.</p>
Interviewer	And then after that incident there were no more incidents that you're aware of, of great importance. I'm sure you probably saw the guys across the border but...
Dewald	<p>Saw the guys many times across the border. We were playing around...we were young and we were looking for action and very frustrated we couldn't go to the border. And I remember the kaplyn very, very good. it had two small low fences and in between the plant is sisal trees. But many places the elephant came and just took the sisal as food, so you had your gaps in between there. And we saw a whole platoon of Frelimo walking in Muzi, very close to Muzi, more to the eastern side of Muzi, about two or three kms. There was farm houses and stuff there and the whole platoon came in of Frelimo. And we actually tried to cause an incident so that we can get some action by firing, not shots at them but firing shots in the ground and stuff like that to make a hell of a noise. And we pretended to do firing and movement. I can still remember I was running and doing fire and movement and shouting and stuff. And we never drew fire from them but apparently when we got back to base there was a hell of an international incident about it. And the intelligence guys picked it up, most probably on the radio, because the Brush guys were there, deployed...all their Portuguese troops were deployed in Jozini...not Portuguese troops, Portuguese speaking troops. And they picked up a lot of international problems, and we were called in and asked about it and we just denied it, we don't know anything about it. But that was just being stupid, being young and being lis for action. But besides that there's no other incident that</p>

	I can remember... real incidents that happened. 121 Battalion deployed two or three companies in the area on a constant basis. It wasn't that good because they went home, and during patrols they just walked off home. It's their area, they're all rural people, so they just walked off and went to visit for the week and then come back not driving. As soon as a patrol gets close to their area they just walk off at night.
Interviewer	And so, I think you said you stayed at Jozini for two years?
Dewald	No, stayed at Jozini till 1983. From end of 1978 till 1983. I became...the rank I had then was sergeant.
Interviewer	And at that stage 121 Battalion had only been deployed in Zululand, it hadn't been deployed anywhere else?
Dewald	121 deployed only in Zululand and nowhere else, but one company went to Oshivelo. In later years, I wasn't part of that battalion anymore but one company went up to Oshivelo. Now I'm not very sure if they got deployed after that, but they went to experience a little bit more there.
Interviewer	Alright, and then in '83 what happened to you?
Dewald	'83 I went for...to become an officer. I went in front of the board. I was actually pushed by Louis Heap. Him and another major there, a woman, Major Zietsman, excellent officer, and they pushed me and another guy called Mel Esterhuizen. He's my neighbour here, he stays in this flat, he's in Saudi Arabia now. But anyhow we became...and then he first went...I didn't want to do it. For some reason I thought this is the best rank in the army. And he went, came back and almost immediately became a trooper lieutenant. And then when I saw that this is actually much more to my advantage laughs I also went a year after that, about nine months after that. went in front of the board in Pretoria, and I think we had one or two of these board...we went on to a short list, stuff like that.
Interviewer	Sort of selection panel and hearing and all of that.
Dewald	Correct. And then they take you through this whole medical...I can still spot the building when you drive here...they listen to your ears and they take you through psychological...you get all your psychologists sitting around there asking you most funniest questions. And I made it eventually and became a CO, and then went on to formative course in army college shortly after that.
Interviewer	You mentioned that one of the...Louis Heap recommended that you go for the officer's course but there was also a woman officer called Zietsman. In those years I know that the woman officers, certainly in the medical corps and certainly in admin in Pretoria and stuff like that, were there many women officers that you encountered in places like Jozini?
Dewald	The reason why Major Zietsman was there is because of Colonel Zietsman, her husband. He was intelligence and most probably

	<p>military intelligence, the Owls. Never saw him wear any uniform, I just knew he was a colonel and he worked closely with Renamo on the Renamo side and with Brush (Bush Reconnaissance Regiment) with the Portuguese stuff. So that's the reason why she came up there. And she was a personnel officer.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But in her own right she was a good officer?</p>
Dewald	<p>Excellent. And I think she became the military attaché in Zimbabwe when I was in Three One Battalion in the Caprivi, she came with a visitor's group from Zimbabwe and I met her there again, the full colonel then.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And that would have been after 1980 when Rhodesia became Zimbabwe?</p>
Dewald	<p>Uhh...yes. She was not a military attaché, she was a...not called military attaché, she was a...it's like a representative or a...she never wore a uniform there or nothing, but she was stationed there for sure, for military purposes. But not a military...they did not allow military attachés that time.</p>
Interviewer	<p>So you go off to Pretoria, you do your officer's course and then you become an officer. And then what happens?</p>
Dewald	<p>Became an officer, became a CO, then I got transferred...I had to be transferred from Jozini and went to 3 SAI Battalion in Potchefstroom. 3 SAI Battalion at that stage, became a company 2<sup>nd</sup> in command. Shortly after that I became a full lieutenant. It was just a "oorgangs rang". Became 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of a company and then I actually requested, because I'd never been an officer, requested...the Colonel at that stage was Johnny Mess...Col Coetzee became the Chief Defence Force at a later stage, Colonel Coetzee. And I requested to him that there was a request that they want a platoon as VIP protectors in Pretoria and I asked him if I can be their lieutenant, or the commanding officer of that platoon, and he said, fine I can go and pick up a little bit more experience how to be a platoon commander. Came here and my first appointment was...we did a lot of training, the troops were only allowed a certain height, six foot and up, profile wise very good, all had to have matric and physically G1K1 and all of that. And did a lot of training, did a lot of training how to drive cars, follow up and advance driving training and stuff like that, we did before the time. And we worked from Blennie under the ground. And then first assignment was General Viljoen's house. So we protected General Viljoen at a guard house at his house. We were the eyes and the ears of him, we worked in three shifts. I can still remember on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday I was there and he had a lot of military attachés there and dignitaries and ministers and everybody. And they gave him...some officers gave him a generator and then they put the lights, 50 into his pine trees, they laid it out there, big one, and hide it between the trees. So the idea was when he finished his speech, to start this generator, and then these lights comes on and they would tell him the power is generated by your generator we bought you for your farm.</p>



	<p>There's no lights on the farm. And before the time I told...my corporal was Boer van Rensburg, told Boer, listen you'd better test this thing, I don't know have you started it? He said, no we haven't. I said, go test it now, because if it comes and he finishes this bloody thing and then it didn't want to start. Murphy's Law, it started when they dropped it off the signalist actually tested, everything was working. Now it wouldn't start. And he was finished and you could hear the clapping hands and alles and I knew this is kak, so we quickly went in and cut the wires and just pushed them into the plugs there. So here the things goes on and they told him about this generator, so I was standing halfway with my walkie-talkie telling these guys what to do and I could hear them bragging about the present, and he even mentioned, but this thing is running very smoothly, softly, can't even hear it. He says, yes, it's the best in the market they bought him. <i>Laughs</i> It was a funny moment but anyhow.</p>
Interviewer	<p>The General was unaware that he was using Eskom power. <i>Laughter</i> How long did you spend in that position?</p>
Dewald	<p>It was short terms of about 4 months. But then we were replaced by groups from 7SAI. But then I went over to General Geldenhuys. So we actually did General Malan first when he was the minister...sorry, just to reverse this, I first started off with General Malan, then I went to General Viljoen, then we did both General Malan and General Viljoen houses. And then General Geldenhuys moved up in rank, he was threatened or whatever, and we had to extend into his house as well. So we were running thin on the ground but he was staying just next to the C-Max prison at that stage. The other two stayed in Waterkloof. And then we were relieved by 7SAI, the same profile guys and everything, and I asked for this...I didn't want this platoon to go back, it was a great bunch of guys, didn't want them to go back to Potchefstroom and getting slipped into one of those admin positions or whatever, and I asked to be consigned to the border and they approved. I actually pulled my strings here in Blennie, I started pulling it then. These guys I want them to have operational experience. On the next tour we're coming back, and I think it was about August, I would like them to have had the border experience. Me myself, I'd never been on the border by then...</p>
Interviewer	<p>But you had been, you'd been on the Mozambican border.</p>
Dewald	<p>On the Mozambican border, yes.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But it wasn't the grens in that sense.</p>
Dewald	<p>Correct. But then they send me. First consignment landed in Five Three Battalion at Ondangwa. That was 1983.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Ok Five Three Battalion was made up of whom?</p>
Dewald	<p>Five Three Battalion was at Ondangwa. Officer Commanding P? van der Walt. Was made up of an intelligence grouping and</p>

	detached infantry companies.
Interviewer	Ok, but all South African infantry companies, no SWATFs, South West African Territory Force?
Dewald	<p>No. That was '83. And then, I was there for about a week and they called us to...and we actually just got into choppers and flew out with a whole kit and I never knew where we were going, and we landed in Mupa in Angola, to run the HAG (helicopter administration area), the helicopter administration, the HAA actually. And they had 26 bunkers there, fuel bunkers, and we had five or six ration pack trucks there, Kwe 100s [ Kwevoel mine protected truck]. Altogether I think I most probably had about 30-35 vehicles there, all in a round area, and we had to protect this and fuel up the choppers landing and replenish Three Two Battalion at that stage and Three One Battalion came past. The ground infantry...they actually got our reference and they came to replenish ammunition and everything from us. Still remember I called in a group from Three Two Battalion by firing a flare, they couldn't find me, and then eventually they found me, but this flare at that time there was a lot number that was not good. It kept on burning and it threw sparks off which kept on burning up to the ground and then it set the whole place on fire. And they followed the smoke later on to get to me, but it became a hell of a fire, and the fire came closer to the bunkers, to the Avgas [aircraft fuel] and everything and I got very worried so I started up all these vehicles and we pulled off there. Well eventually we got out of it, we had flat tyres, we had to bundu bash, it's a thick jungle there in the Mupa area, and we had to bundu bash. And eventually we got these thirty odd vehicles out through there and Three Two actually met up a little further away from us and we decided just to go another ten kms away from the smoke and commotion that went on there. So they actually slept in my base that night. I can't remember the company's name. Jan Hougaard was the company commander at that stage. Anyway, and then onwards we were used to take a ration from point A to point B in the Angolan line country. So I remember still going through Mupa and Mupa was just spoor, I never saw so many spoor in my life. Must have been about a company plus that went through that town, its sand streets, and we could count them and see them very fresh. Luckily never attacked us, or we just evaded, or just went another direction from us. But we had to replenish the guys on the ground and I can still remember replenishing Three Two Battalion at a certain place and all I had was a very old map and a compass to go through. And I had this...you used to get that metal mirror. So I had my metal mirror driving in a Kwe in the front because a Kwe does bundu bashing a little better. Got in the Kwe in the front, and the sun came, I actually took the bearing and I had this mirror and I tilted it up to where it matched with the bearing, and I went with that same way, sat in the vehicle and shone the sunlight to the driver, so he knew that if I drew him actually with a piece of charcoal a line on the roof there and I kept it there, and I said to him, you keep it in between those two lines. Obviously if a</p>

	tree is too big you have to go around but you just come back again so that little shining thing from the sun is above you and in between those two lines.
Interviewer	I find that quite amazing, there you are, you've got quite an important job, you're looking after a lot of stuff, you're quite vital to the guys in the region because you've got all the diesel, you've got a lot of the rations, you've got lots of men under your command, and yet the equipment you've got is pre First World War, in fact the Anglo Boer War they could have done that.
Dewald	Yes, you're right but when it comes a 'Boer maak 'n plan'. I mean, what we had is a map, the maps were old and the compass. They never had GPSs at that stage, I wish we had, but that is about the best you can navigate.
Interviewer	So you spend your time at Mupa for a while. What happened after that?
Dewald	Came back from Mupa, actually were relieved by some other guys, up to today I don't know, it's a black battalion that took over from me, don't know who they are. Went back to Ongiva, landed in Ongiva and actually dug a big hole there and made a braai place for us, because some of our duties were ceremonial, we had to do a lot of drill there, so we drilled the guys and kept them sharp in drill movements and stuff like that, and we were actually just there for guard duties around the parameter of Ongiva. By that stage next to me was the fire force of the parabats. A group of Three One Battalion was there. We could never get to Three One Battalion, their Recce group was there. And Three Two Battalion we also could hardly get to them, they just kept by themselves and had guards at their premises and never allowed any white face in there. So that was what we were doing and I can still also remember that we went up again on a replenishment job and that was close to Cuvelai, we were driving there and we were driving back. On our way back we managed to hit a big shona and could drive for about a hundred kms on this shona and no bushes nothing, it just went so smoothly. But there was these short...where they cut the bushes down.
Interviewer	So you had the stumps.
Dewald	Stumps. It was flat wheels, but you can't believe it [how many flat tyres there were]. And we eventually ended up between Anhanka and Ongiva. We ended up in between there and we took the tar road. And we also hit a big stump so the tie rod of one of the Kwe 100s was bent, and the one wheel was looking this way and the other one this way, and when we got onto the tar road it just ate up the tyre and it was just smoke and I just thought, we're not going to stop here. Go right through. And we ended up there and we were actually airlifted from there. Never went back to Five Three Battalion Ondangwa or Ruacana. We flew straight back from there to Pretoria with this platoon in a C130. And then we went on leave and we came back for a second run with General Geldenhuys and General Viljoen, and General Malan. I can

	remember also General Malan had many VIP visitors that year, coming in with projectors and stuff, giving him presentations.
Interviewer	Did you ever get a chance to speak to the generals or was it just a case of salute as they go back.
Dewald	I spoke to the wives many times. I took the wives to rugby... General Viljoen's wife to the rugby. I took General Malan's wife to go shopping and stuff like that. I spoke to General Viljoen because we also had to check their parcels. All the post came through us and we were trained at that time with that advanced training how to smell explosives inside, how to identify any fat on envelopes and stuff like that, and those things we kept one side and we gave them to the experts and they went through it. So we were the first line of defence for that <i>laughs</i> but anyhow, if I find something wrong I used to go to General Viljoen and I tell him. Many of my troops had a great time with him because he loves working on vehicles. And he would call the guards, very quickly, and tell them just hold this spanner for me, or help me to put up this engine inside the vehicle, and very relaxed with the troops. I never became so close to him, I never had the opportunity actually, but the troops, because being there and he knows their faces, it's all very well behaved guys, he would like calling them. Many came from the farms and stuff and they're very handy and could give him some advice and he loves it. And he loves jogging in the mornings. Every morning he went for a jog and our duty was to jog with him, to protect him. He will not allow that. He wouldn't allow us to go near him. He takes a route, every time another route so we can't catch him out. So I used to drive behind him many times, just keep him in my sights down that road there, because he gets very irritated if you follow him around. So I just, ok, now he's going up that road, so I drove to that point to see, ok, now he's going there, I go to that point...
	END OF SIDE A ( <i>counter at 548</i> )
	SIDE B ( <i>counter at 6</i> )
Interviewer	After you came back from Angola the first time you got sent back to Pretoria where you looked after the generals again for a while and then that would have been...
Dewald	1983.
Interviewer	And so after looking after the generals for a while again, what did they do with you then?
Dewald	I remained a company commander, I became a second in command of Charlie Company in 3SAI in 1983. By that time my VIP group klaared out, they were not Permanent Force okes. And my company commander was Jan Wessels, which I'll off the record tell you a little story about him now, he's just phoned me yesterday. So yes, he became my company commander, he was a captain, I was a full lieutenant at that stage, and we started...we're now talking '84, '85, '86. In 1985, '86 we were

deployed first mission...well obviously we...I think I must mention that that time the army started off a new concept of doing...we called it in Afrikaans, modeele companies. Modeele companies consist out of five platoons, not four platoons. And we had to come and recruit them here at Voortrekkehoogte and we recruited them between the ADK and the PDK - altyd deur die kak, en permanent deur die kak. But those guys unfortunately were all...well they had numerous matriculants there with them, they had an intake...somebody must have made a mistake with their call up instructions...they had thousands and thousands here, and we could come and pick them out. And our orders were pick out matriculants and higher only, and must have five companies. It was a test run with those companies. Normally you get a mixed company, a guy who's got standard three, and a guy who's got standard six, and a guy who's got standard ten, and stuff like that. This was all matriculants and higher. So it was a very educated group of young conscripts. And we trained them in a company and obviously we took about every prize that was at the end of the year on the fitness and on a lot of things, on the different phases of warfare we had to train these guys with. I remember doing a lot...working actually our asses off because those years you do training in the day, you repeat at night. Everything you did in the day has to be repeated at night, in special phases. And you never saw your house, it's just a place called Bloubos outside Potchefstroom. And then we were ripe and ready to be deployed but not...let me just think...we were deployed firstly into Ovamboland. Went through the Oshivelo phase, did the whole thing, did the retraining, did the evaluation, we came out tops on the evaluation, were deployed into Five Three Battalion's area, just south, at a place called Okatopi. Okatopi as you know is a horse and motorbike South Africa team. Not SWA Spec, which also had a similar set up. After a while they had a...the officers commandings of the different infantry battalions...that was 1985...in Oshivelo, had a meeting, they call it a vleismark. Vleismark whereby they say, ok, you're from 7SAI Phalaborwa, and I'm from 8SAI Upington, I need 2 captains but I've got 2 very good lieutenants, would you like to swop with me, and they swopped around. So they sold you your soul and everything there, and bargained for officers and NCOs and stuff. sometimes you had more NCOs in one base than the others and every year that was a "vleismark" [a meat market]. And they actually decided there that Jan Wessels, which was my company captain...sorry, in those years I became a captain as well...so we were two captains in a company which is not healthy because we've got different styles and they decided to move him out. So I became the company commander in 1986 in Okatopi. At that stage Okatopi was run by a Permanent officer and NCO, with all the horses and everything, called Jan Truter. And Jan had a brother called Faan Truter, they're identical twins. Red faced, even the freckles on their faces are identical. Unless you see the rank you could never work out who's who. But Jan was sent on a course at that stage and I had to take over the company. And the

	<p>whole base and all of it inside the base. That's handling all the horses, I think we had about 144 horses there, and motorbikes, more than 50 serviceable motorbikes we had. our troops were not specialised infantry. By saying that meaning they couldn't ride the horses, nor could they use the bikes, and that's why they had their own people from later called 12 SAI in Potchefstroom. Bereede Eenheid. So the Bereede guys came in also as a platoon or two and were deployed there under my command. And I utilised them on horse patrols and worked their patrol routes out and different intelligence you receive you send them to different spots, etc. Same with the bikes. But I became a very good bike rider because we had these instructors there doing nothing during the day so they trained me on these bikes, and a horse rider of note. I've got beautiful photographs, never did it in my life, and they just had the way of teaching you how to do this. And I had the king of the horses, it was mine. It's always the company commander's horse. I can remember it's a stallion, a huge thing. The Moffels drive past him at night, throw down the feed, the cubes and stuff that they eat, but nobody eats unless that horse has eaten. It's unbelievable how you used to sit there at night-time watching the sun go down and check these horses and the way they operated. But anyhow we did a lot of operations there that time. We gathered a lot of information. I remember a gruesome story about Koevoet: I caught a guy and Koevoet came in and wanted him, and I gave him to them, and it wasn't four hours and then they came back with four SWAPOs killed, strapped on the side of their Casspirs. And I said to them, how did you do that? He says to me, you guys don't know how to work them. The Casspir's got seats on the side, and he just make him sit on this seat on this side, put his legs onto the other side, and they jump through the roof, just jumped on his legs, legs bend this way, and he just decided ok, you're going to kill me today, I'd better talk. Which they did eventually, did kill him. About a week after that they brought his body back to me and just threw it over my fence. And I saw crows and the guys said the told me there's something going on there, Koevoet dropped something there, and the crows and the stuff is eating there. So I went there and I saw this body there, so I had to just bury it properly. And I could never find the culprit, nobody knows about this incident. Wasn't the same group that came to collect him from me. Anyway it was one of those things that Koevoet did.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But you're a captain at this stage and I know that the military had all sorts of programs towards winning over the local community, the sort of hearts and minds thing and so on, did you ever talk to Koevoet about that and say, listen we're working on different wave lengths here?</p>
Dewald	<p>Umm...not there. Must be honest, but I'll tell you later when we come to the urban phase, whereby I actually did tell them this is not on. I'll come back to that. But there it's like a war, you get attacked at night, they throw you with mortars and everything, you run into the bunkers, you know about your mates being shot,</p>

	<p>there's many things that happens to close friends of yours. I actually watched a whole attack onto the Koevoet base from Okatopi base just to the north western side. There was a base, I can't remember what it was called. We never used to talk to each other. They were in another world.</p>
Interviewer	<p>So they operated entirely separate to you.</p>
Dewald	<p>Entirely separately. Separate orders. The best of them was that they could roam wherever they want. We were restricted to borders and to latitudes and graditudes, which they were not. They can roam in your area like mad. You can freeze your area via Oshakati, it gets sent out to all the military bases that's a frozen area, I'm doing a night operation tonight, here you get Koevoet running around all over there, claiming your kills and stuff like that. So no, we never worked together. I'll tell you it later on as well that we did an operation together. But that was '86...beautiful base, Okatopi, in the whole of the operational area in Ovamboland. Besides now Caprivi. Caprivi area had beautiful bases. But that was horse shit. They used the horse shit to plant grass. They grew like you won't believe. Best bunker set ups we had. Best look out points. Horses. It was just another world. I loved every moment of the 4 months that I was there. But alright, then we flew back into South Africa again, into 3SAI Battalion. And next mission was to deploy...now we're talking '86 now...into Alexandra. There's a bowling course and the South Africa army musical band or something, that was their offices. Very close to Alexandra. I won't find it today but I remember it still very clearly. Went in there and they said to us you can pitch your tents up on the bowling greens, and we put the tents up on the bowling greens. Nobody was using the bowling greens seems to me. I found it very odd. But anyhow, and we deployed into Alexandra with daily missions into there. And then we did an operation with the police. I was called in and we did a hell of a planning session. They brought in 3000 police recruits and early in the...we actually practised this whole thing in with them and it was a hell of a well organised operation. They deployed about...three o'clock in the morning...they deployed this 3000 recruits around Alexandria. Placed them right around, to tell them, nobody gets out of here, they stay inside. And I'm not sure but I think at that time it was 17 streets in Alexandra going exactly the same direction.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Yes, it's a grid system, and you've got Da Gama Road running down one side, and London Road down the other, and as you say there are 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and crossroads like that.</p>
Dewald	<p>Correct, yes. And the first time I actually...what we trained in the past actually about jumping from vehicles, we deployed the troops by driving down the street and as we were driving with the Samils they jumped out. And every five metres or ten metres you had a troop standing, and they turned inwards towards this side, and the vehicles drove simultaneously the other side and they dropped them off. And so we actually blocked off a whole street block from the one side on this side and...they all turned inwards</p>

	<p>towards the houses. And the police, more experienced police, went from house to house until they cleared that area. Nobody's allowed to run from inside that cordon into another street block, they were kept inside. And they took out most unbelievable things there, dagga and guns and, not only AK47s, grenades, caches, stolen vehicles they got from there. And as they're now starting to finish off, the line to the west gets picked up by these vehicles all in the same movement while driving they jump in there, they go around to the other block, they get deployed in there and then these guys what was still standing on the other street, just turns around and then face inwards again. So we went through block from block to block. And while we were busy with that exercise, it actually took us two days. Had a lot of journalists with me to monitor this whole thing. Nothing major...there was no major incidents. We had a lot of black on black violence, most probably people that pimped to the police or to the police informants and stuff like that. We saw a lot of black on black violence. And I was called out immediately, just suddenly a message came over my radios that I need to report to...I think it was 115 Battalion, we worked under the command of 115 Battalion, a Pretoria based...I'm not sure...no, no, it's not 115...we worked under Wits Command. That's correct. Under Wits Command we worked. Doringkop or Doringfontein.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Yes, there was Doornkop base and then Wits Command itself was downtown, I think it fell into Doornfontein?</p>
Dewald	<p>Doornfontein?. And then we got called out and KwaNdebele was burning. When we were called out the briefing I received from our intelligence offices was that the eight minister's houses burned down during the night and there are many, many bodies lying in the streets. It's burning, we have to pick up. I actually gave my company sergeant major leave for the day, and we had to pick up our kit so quickly and moved...we had all the military police in front of us, it's just lights, and we were able to drive through Johannesburg onto the KwaNdebele side of it without stopping once. So we had this whole convoy and when my Sergeant Major came back, Arno Klaasens, we were gone. He never knew where we were. We told nobody. We actually didn't know. We followed the police vehicles. So when we got to KwaNdebele we were put in a place called Verena. It's an old school. And we were there placed with more than 3000 policemen as well. A police Major called Klaasens. And I immediately set up camp there and started...I had about 50 soldiers in my headquarter platoon. You must remember our company were almost 600 strong. So I had about 50 guys. One is doing the post and the other one is doing the intelligence. All trained intelligence training, maps and placing up of ops rooms and running ops rooms, and signallers and medics and chefs and everything, I had with me. So those guys immediately just occupied one classroom and put up our maps...we actually got excellent maps there...put our overlays up and started getting all the information, read through all the information and started plotting all the incidents and where and</p>



	<p>orientated us quickly there. Which I couldn't say the same from our police partners. They were just disorganised. Never even had an ops room, stuff like that. More than 3000 of them. We didn't get much information from the police, we got quite a lot of information from the military via our radio systems and we only had to react on that. Main mission, stabilise KwaNdebele. And which I took this small little country in our maps and I divided it into areas and we sent some platoons and some sections and unbelievable how grateful these guys were that we came in. I had to stop my troops from getting presents from them. I had a whole shed full of cattle and a whole pen full of sheep that they gave to us. And then I realised that these guys, they ask for assistance, once one of my patrol goes past there, the blacks will ask them for assistance to just escort them out of this area, and then they have a truckload of whatever they have, possessions they have, and then one of the troops spots a nice generator and he will tell the guy, we'll take you there but I want the generator. So it started becoming...and then I stopped that and I actually said to them, I'll court martial you if ever there's one thing coming here again and if I find that out. Then it stopped after that. But we deployed into shops...our troops deployed into the shop. The shop owner looked after them, gave them whatever they want from the shelves. I'm talking huge shops. I'm talking Checkers type sizes. They were just burning. Every night shops were burning. Every night anything that was of value or somebody that's got a little bit of status just went down, they're burning them down.</p>
Interviewer	And who's 'they' in this instance?
Dewald	<p>The most funniest part of it, I don't know up to today who 'they' were. What we knew, there's a group called Mbokodo, and there was another group called...well it's like the vigilantes. And up to today I don't understand what the fight was about. I've got three black partners now in today's life which is all Ndebeles, and they're slowly teaching me about Mbokodo and what the history was about it. I was just actually stopping black on black violence. We counted one morning, 45 bodies. I've got photographs of that. Some of the bodies the flames are still burning on the bodies. The necklaces was in. The tyres around the guys and burning them. And sometimes at night we deployed, you could hear it's like Impis running. Impis running, you could hear the whistling. They were just whistling all over. It's like signals to each other. But it's huge groups. They're like black leopards, you can't see them, they move around. You can just suddenly hear...you can actually before you see it you hear the flames and then there's a house burning. And you rush to that area, there's nobody there. And you hear again, whoo whoo, they go around and just burn and burn and burn. And I went to Ulzicht...the policeman's name is Ulzicht...I went with him to Bronkhorspruit mortuary one day. We actually had to make a report there. And I saw the bodies lying there. They had no space, no place for them. They were lying on the grass. They were lying inside stacked 3, 4, 5,</p>

stacked up. The opening of these bodies I don't know exactly what exactly they do there, but it's opened up, but next to them are just bodies lying, it's a terrible smell. And then...we slowly I think we made a hell of a difference there. We stopped many incidents from happening. It's the biggest crowds I've ever seen that I faced with my people. 25000 wasn't a small crowd. You see them running like ants over hills, those crowds. Going to other places. It's called Kwaggafontein. Kwaggafontein C and D. I can't remember all of those names, but they run from spot to spot and they like kill whatever is not part of their organisation. Many of them had the red headbands on them. And Mbokodo was the old conservative type of ministers and clan and what can I say...traditional leaders. And they tried to stop these youngsters from doing this, but it's just the youth that took over. There's not a petrol station that wasn't burnt. We found many caches. We found many things. ANC caches. MK caches. Not APLA. At the time it was MK. MK caches so it was stirred by a bigger force than we thought at that stage. Funny thing is one day they asked me to stop...no...I was given the order and I was at an order group at 115 Battalion...the police was there, everybody...and a message came out to my company that we have to escort these buses, they are coming by the thousands into the area and we have to escort them and see that they get to their end destination safely. Which we did. And as we approached one place near Kwaggafontein, the police came out of the bushes, they shot these buses to pieces – not shot with small arms fire – with gas grenades and rubber bullets and stuff. What I can still remember clearly is all the shoes lying on the tar there. Thousands! And guys just popped out of those buses and they ran away. And I went and I thought to myself, what the hell! Now I was almost turning our fire towards them. It was a hell of a confusion. I went to their officer commanding and said, what the hell is going here? He says, no, these are the guys that we had to stop. They are the shit stirrers coming from Mamelodi and all over, they are coming into the area now, and they are the main stirrers. I said, why did you not tell me? We wouldn't have allowed them to come in in the first place, we would have blocked them somewhere. Now you've told us to escort them, we escort them in here, you come and shoot them to pieces. It was chaos. I was the moer in and I almost court martialled because of the way I handled this, this Major Klaasen. I couldn't understand it, we had our own choppers there so every day I flew the choppers to different areas, see where they congregate, these huge groups and stuff. And we were too thin on the ground, one platoon couldn't do it. The police were just happy just to throw tear gas. I went into an incident once whereby I walked away and I stopped the, whatever he was, a sergeant or whatever. They loved going into these houses at night, kick down the doors, never had any successes. Claiming that there are caches here and stuff like that. Never had any successes. And we had to accompany them, many times we had to give them protection because once the crowd realises that there's five or six policemen in one of the houses they'll attack

them, they'll kill them. So we had to keep the crowd away while they're doing their thing inside there. And then they drag out these old people and tie them up and start hitting them with sjamboks and stuff like that. I just walked away, withdrew my troops, and they knew that they had no more packing and they also had to withdraw. And I always went to complain to Klaasen, always went to Klaasen, and Klaasen says, no, he'll look into it and...they have no structure of discipline, they have no structure to force down discipline. You do what you like, if you're in a squad like this, you do what you like, and we have to clean up afterwards. I must tell you about one incident whereby my troops lied for me. There was an incident whereby one of our drivers, as he stood out of the Buffel, got hit by a stone just between the eyes, and he got so the moer in that he opened fire on this guy and he killed him. Major Klaasen came, I called him over the radio, he came in with a few detectives, lieutenants, and he said, where's the other stones that these guys threw you with? I said to him, well I think this was the only incident – I was also called in to the incident – he says to me, but I can see many stones lying around here, you guys were attacked. Then I realised where he was going. Not one word after this, nothing! We had a few kills. We killed about 8 people at that stage but some of it was necessary, some of it we were attacked, we were petrol bombed and we had to stop, we had the orders, we had the noordtoestand in our side so we could go mad. The other incident was an incident whereby there was a law against two or more people gathering. We had to stop them from gathering. It worked well, because then they don't go in these great Impis and they just...when they're finished there's 45 bodies lying around. And it kept them from killing each other. But they went into a place and there was about 500 people there, and called them to disperse, the lieutenant, and they did not want to, so he said they fired warning shots and it was chaos, and then I think 4 civilians got killed there in this whole chaos, and they were starting to throw them stones and they went crazy. There was a wake where they all sit around the body and the next day the police called me and said these guys got killed, and I was told by my lieutenant that they heard the shots fired in the area, and when they investigated they came across this, and the police told me it's R4 cartridges lying around there. Many R4 and South Africa boots lying around there. And I called him and I said to him, is this true? And he was a great guy, he was a teacher, a trooper, National Serviceman, and he said, no, the police are talking shit. Maybe somebody got hold of R4 type of rifles but it's not us. And we were already back at Potchefstroom, the story came out from other troops that was involved, they couldn't keep quiet anymore. And he got court martialled and up to today I don't know what happened to him...about this lying, and I felt so bad because I actually put my head on a block, I said, there's no way this guy will lie to me, I will believe and I stuck with them and we wrote report after report about this whole thing and it actually died down, up to today nothing happened. But just the way he lied to me, I felt very bad

	about it. anyhow that's...
Interviewer	It seems to me that as the military you had very strict operating instructions, I mean, you had to write reports, you had proper order groups and so on and so forth, but the police didn't seem to have that thing. Did you ever think to yourself, well I'm a soldier, what am I doing in this circumstance? You were trained in conventional warfares and infantrymen. Ok, you obviously did COIN ops as part of you training, but did it ever occur to you that you were actually in a policeman's job?
Dewald	It did. It did occur to us. And if it wasn't for the situation on the ground, I will come back to your question, I'll just give you one example. We had a proper roadblock, not the police put one thing in the road that stopped the people, we had a proper roadblock with booms and everything set up there, and we stopped a vehicle, and as I was talking to the driver...no, no. when the vehicle stopped – it's a Valiant – when it stopped, the driver walked off. I thought he's going to go for a leak. And we had our gunners on the inner circle vehicle protecting the operators in there. The gunner was always standing there on the vehicle inside the set up. And I said to him, just keep an eye on this guy. And he shouted out later, this guy's walking, he's not stopping, he's going into the dark areas and we won't be able to find him. So a few other troops just ran off and caught him, and he looked suspicious and I thought, what the hell is going on here? And as I was talking to him, I could hear and I could see the Valiant, how this guy kicks the Valiant's boot, and it became a bubble...he just kicked it and shouted. And I took him and I said, open up here. And there was this guy about to be going to this bundu courts of theirs. And I can tell you if it wasn't for that, he would have been burnt the next morning. They just had their own courts these guys, decided that it's your time, it's your time. And that was job satisfaction, we saved him from getting killed, and we arrested this guy. And we actually arrested a lot of them after that as well because he spoke out. The police has got a way of torturing anything out of you. It wasn't an hour or two and then we actually drove...by doing that we stopped a lot of things as well. But to come back to your question, yes, we did feel, because we just came back from the border, and now we're in civilian set up, we don't go do things on ourselves, we get ordered and asked officially according to the law by the police to assist. So what the police did is they gave us one broad, no dates attached, to this thing, and said, this is your mandate from us, we want you to help us. So and then it spreads over a period of a few weeks. And I actually did my own thing, I couldn't take it anymore, I couldn't take their order groups anymore. It's a joke, it's not an order group. The one police he's a sergeant, the other one is a major, and they fight about something that happened at home! there's no discipline, there's no direction, there's not clear orders, there's no method of giving an order. They have no intelligence, what they get on the ground now, or what they torture somebody from, they will get that evidence. Whereby we got our sources, we

	<p>actually pay these guys. I had a fund to pay for information. We got these through hearts and minds of the people. We helped wherever we could. We never knew who the enemy was. Just wanted to keep these guys out of each other's throats. But we had an intelligence system. I had a few land rovers, I could trust these guys, my intelligence officers, which is troops which did a course on intelligence and they went out to the area, recruited sources for us. Went there on a daily basis, got the information, plotted on the board, I could plan about it, I could give orders out and I can deploy people to do the job, come back, do a nabetracting rehearsal on the whole thing and plan again, and that's how we do it. I later on kept information away from the police because it was useless to give it to them. They had 3000 troops there, I never knew where they were. Where were they deployed? What were they were doing? I never saw them. Well maybe they were deployed in some different area, I'm a bit harsh now, but that's how it worked.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Ok, so you go through this time in KwaNdebele, then you go back to Potch and...</p>
Dewald	<p>Then towards the end of 1986 the infantry commanders finished the vleismark for that year again, and then I find myself – I've asked for it – to go to any operational base in the whole area in Namibia. And I was then sent to Three One Battalion in Omega, in the Caprivi strip with another captain...I was a captain at that stage...another captain called Maritz Taylor. Then also a sergeant major called Arno Klaasens. He for some reason started off with me in 3 SAI, ended with me at Three One Battalion, went to Smithsdrift with the deployment of the Bushmen there and kept on there, and I never seemed to lose this guy. <i>Laughs</i></p>
Interviewer	<p>Your careers sort of shadowed each other.</p>
Dewald	<p>Yes, all the time.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Ok, so you get to Three One Battalion, which was later 201 Battalion.</p>
Dewald	<p>No, no, it was called 201 Battalion then already.</p>
Interviewer	<p>That's one of the Bushmen Battalions. Now was there only one Bushmen Battalion or were there several?</p>
Dewald	<p>Two Bushmen Battalions. 201 Battalion and 203 Battalion. 203 Battalion from Tsumkwe South West Africa, and 201 Battalion from Omega. A little bit of history on the split of the battalion, and they can actually tell you the story much better than me. I found that out when we started getting the dress we are going to wear in South Africa after we came back, the stories came out. Why they don't want to use the boonie. You know what a bonnie is, it's like a Glengarry.</p>
Interviewer	<p>It's a kind of military hat that goes just back across the middle here.</p>

Dewald	<p>Yes. The two battalions, you know how it started, I'm not going to elaborate on it, it was a battle group Alpha and battle group Bravo. Battle group Bravo became Three Two Battalion and battle group Alpha became Three One Battalion. One done by Delville Linford, the other one by Colonel Jan Breytenbach. They moved down towards the Kavango River, Buffalo base, and we stayed in the centre of the Caprivi at Omega base. Also firstly called camp Alpha. It later changed to Three One Battalion. And then they were Three Two Battalion. But in those years there was a guy called Coen Upton, he was not the commanding officer, Delville Linford was the commanding officer. Coen Upton thought he was the commanding officer. And did many horrible things, and not well respected by many people that I know of. He was also part of Operation Savannah with Delville Linford and he maybe was a good fighter with the equipment that he had. But the legend has it that there's a road going north from Omega into Angola called Jacks Se Pad. Now he took a few Bushmen up in Jacks Se Pad and killed them on the other side of the kaplyn, just into the Angolan territory. The reason, I'm not so sure today about it, I have to actually make a call or two and I'll get you the reason why he did it. And then he came back and then it developed that we started to wear the boonie as a headdress, and when we came back here in South Africa they said they don't want the bonnie of Coen Upton's Jack Se Pad incident. They don't want to participate in that. They wanted the green beret. But anyhow, and that is because of that. Also there was a hell of a twist between the different families and different background groups, and they came from different areas in Angola. And they were part of <i>flechas</i>, [Bushmen units formed by the Portuguese in Angola] from different areas as well, and legend also has it that 25% of them got killed. Between the war, UNITA, FAPLA, and FNLA, MPLA and Fletcher. And then that's how come they started moving south and that's where the South African army got hold of them. But then this group from 203 Battalion decided that they will go south into the Bushmanland area towards Tsumkwe and Mangetti Duin.</p>
Interviewer	And that's on the border of what is now Khaudum game reserve.
Dewald	<p>Correct. It's on the southern side of the Khaudum Game Reserve, which is not actually a game reserve. I've been inside there, I think I saw one baster gemsbok (Roan antelope) for the whole time I've been there while I was with UNTAG, I wanted them to go and hunt there, I couldn't find any animals. And anyway that's the reason why they split up. And Pinky Coetzee was the founder of 203 Battalion. He didn't have a pinky. He was an old ranger from the Etosha game reserve. He told me a story once, that he flew in the earlier years over the Etosha and he counted – there were 4 guys in the aircraft – they counted 57 000 gemsbok going through there. They counted and then they divided by four. Just to try and get a more accurate...four counted individually. You must hear the stories he tells you about the whole of South West. Anyway he was a founder and</p>

	unfortunately they were not a good fighting battalion. Never were exposed into fighting as the other group was. And were more into the South West African war whereby 201 Battalion, were 99% into the Angolan areas...we had our own areas.
Interviewer	So you get there and you join 201, you're a captain still at this stage?
Dewald	Captain at 201 Battalion. First year at 201 Battalion I was the training commander. Had a little office inside the base. Never deployed in '86. First deployment did with Delta Company, which was a Barakwena company, also a nomadic tribe but called the Barakwenas, but black. Bara means water, Kwena is Bushmen. So black Bushmen...also referred to as Water Bushmen. Watermanne. Did a lot of training before we left. Took over from a guy called Skik Skikkerlyn, which later went to Three Two Battalion – you might have a story or two about him as well. very naughty guy, he's in Dubai now.
Interviewer	Sounds to me like Afrikaans might be quite a common language in Iraq and Dubai and the Middle East.
Dewald	Very! Even the pilots that fly you on the commercial flights speak Afrikaans. Called Danie Retief now...flying for Emirates.
Interviewer	Ok so you're part of the training battalion and then you start getting deployed, and your deployments were all in Angola?
	END OF SIDE B ( <i>counter at 525</i> )
	TAPE TWO SIDE A
Interviewer	You were saying that with 201 you were deployed to Ruacana, and we're talking about the end of '86. What then happened in those months then going into '87.
Dewald	Ok, just one correction, I'm remembering that end '86 till about four months into '87 I was the training commander still at that stage. And then we left in April 1987, we flew with Delta Company with C160s into Hurricane base in Ruacana, called Five Four Battalion at that stage...Five Four Battalion headquarters. Five Four Battalion headquarters commanding officer, Johaan Lambrecht. Called him Liewe Lampies. Anyway, as we came into the base I took over from Bez Bezuidenhout which was running Alpha company at that stage, also a Barakwena company. Being met on the airport at Hurricane and did handing and taking over of vehicles, ammunition – some of the ammunition were dented. Some of the RPGs missiles or rockets were dented and stuff, so we had to destroy them and then ask for new until we have our full first line and first line reserve ammunition. Take over the vehicles, if I'm not mistaken I think I had 18 Buffel vehicles at that stage handed over to me. And then we drove off to Ruacana. At Ruacana we had an underground base which is just for Three One Battalion, 201 Battalion...didn't allow anybody in there except for the commanding officer. We had our own communication there. We

had our own Recce teams there. Special Forces guys being trained by...actually got operator's badges, belongs to Three Two Battalion, or to 201 Battalion, run by Neil Reynolds. Neil Reynolds has now got a security company in Baghdad. I got summonsed to the ops room that same night and there I found Cokes de Koker and Koos Stadler two guys, at that stage they were with 5 Recce and they're giving us a presentation and a whole intelligence briefing about SWAPO bases south of Xangongo in the Shangalala district. On the eastern side of the Cunene River. And we actually had a whole plan drawn up that day, approved by Lambrechts, he was sitting in on the briefing, that we will attack this grouping of SWAPO at the Shangalala area. And the whole plan consisted out of us being part of the advance group doing the attack with the black contingent of, I think they were called, Five Two Battalion, Five Two Recce Battalion. They were based just outside of Ondangwa. They had a base for their Recce grouping there. And we were also supposed to be a stopper group to the northern side just south of Xangongo for anybody that runs off there. So the actual plan was to laser the base at night, bring in the smart bombs with the Mirages, and that will then spring this whole attack, and we will do the attack, go through, whoever runs away, we might be lucky and get them just before Xangongo with the 201 Battalion stopper groups. While we were still busy with the briefing there was a commandant coming in from the SAAF offices, SAAF operation room, and was saying that the Cuban radar does not allow...there's not a gap for the Mirage to go in and do the strike. And there's also a lot of movement in the area at that specific time – the intelligence caught that somehow – and then they put this whole operation on hold and Cokes de Koker and Koos Stadler then went back to Ondangwa and the planning was approved and so we would have done it at a later stage. So we now received our orders to go into Angola. Our areas were west of the Cunene River from south of Xangongo up to round about Cuamato, no, Cahama, Cahama, and another line south towards Ruacana. That was my area then allocated to us. At that specific stage another group, Echo company, commanded by Duvenhage, he was a two pip lieutenant, excellent soldier. He had an Echo company deployed to the eastern side, closer to Cuamatu and the south of...the road going from Xangongo into Ongiva. First of all we replenish everything, dropped a lot of our rations and stuff at the dam wall. The dam wall was huge, it's like a rugby field inside there, very noisy, some of the pumps are still working for the South West African side. The northern part of the pumps and thing was shot out in 1974 with Operation Savannah. Never started operational after that. A huge, huge, huge...it's got a nice stoep...it was my stoep, I used to sit there...it's about 30 stories high, you have this vision over the flats and the river, but very noisy because of the pumps and because of the birds...swallows, flying, making a hell of a noise. So it wasn't that nice to be around there but we utilised some of the areas inside the dam wall...looks like big halls and big chambers and stuff. we



used to pack our spare batteries, and our tyres, and our radiators, stuff that we liberated from them because we never got any. We used to pack them out. There was a contingent staying there from 701 Battalion, a guy called André Wietz. He used to be a Recce in Three One Battalion, he went over to 701 Battalion and became the company commander and that company used to look after this dam wall that was there for the sole purpose of...it was guys from the eastern Caprivi, not very good soldiers, that's why they didn't put them into combat, they gave them these static jobs to do. Well biggest successes I think they had is they got about 20 bicycles per night, going over the low water bridge, they capture the bicycles. That whole place was lying full of bicycles at a certain stage. *Laughs* So well then we started deploying north after we replenished and I actually went up to a certain navigated point just south of a town called Dongwena and felt my way around there. We were still looking for SWAPO at that stage. Got a lot of information and movement and stuff and followed up...actually in that very same day, first time I've ever been deployed with the Bushmen operation in Angola, I was driving in a spoor...actually quite a nice road, a ground road, a gravel road, and I saw bicycle tracks in front of me and I had a Bushman that was always...I never asked him to...but he's always flanking me, he's always looking after me. His name was Cowboy. He used to put his bush hat up like this, he said he can't hear, he wants to put the bush hat up like this, and then I just out of the corner of my eye watched him and see that he's also watching this spoor, and as we drove further north I could see this bicycle is getting "trapped" now [pedalled hard] you can see the marks in the sand and later on you could see, it looks like a snake, he could hear our vehicles. And Cowboy watching this, watching this and then suddenly this track just moved out to the left, and immediately he tapped on the driver's and he showed the driver must turn left and all my vehicles followed me turning to the left, and we deployed, and it was chaos. Everybody just ran off, followed the spoor, and I actually tried to be in front of this because I wanted to know how these guys operate in the veld. And no radios taken off the vehicles and just took a few magazines and mortar bombs here and there and just ran off chasing this like wild dogs. And at certain spots there were haak en steek trees. And you could see the human flesh sitting there. And this how your survival instinct, how this guy thought. And then Cowboy, I learned from him, he comes to a certain spot and then you don't know where the spoor is going to, and he will anticipate where that spoor has gone to and he will run that direction and you can be a hundred percent sure it's that direction. So it's just instinct. But it was chaos. Now we've got the guys on the radio from Ruacana asking have we got any success? Keep on bugging me. Later on switched my radio off, because, I don't know what's going to happen about this. This guy is playing cat and mouse with us. We had about 200 troops deployed and we can't catch this oke in a small area of kilo by kilo. Maybe I'm making this story very long, but what actually

	happened at the end of the day is that this guy broke through our lines, picked up his bicycle again and drove off. And eventually we came to the spoor back to where the bicycle was and we saw he's just disappeared. But it's pure survival and instinct of...
Interviewer	You also have to admire him for evading 200 armed soldiers and Bushmen.
Dewald	I did. And after I called the guys together and said to them, this is never going to happen again, and I actually enforced them to have a radio and to do this and listen to my command. I will co-ordinate this thing, or somebody will at least co-ordinate it from a central point then we will have successes. It took them a while to...actually they tested me, tested how strong I am, and for a long time I actually drove my own vehicle. They didn't want to give me a driver. I was a Captain; I had to drive my own vehicle. <i>Laughs</i> Anyhow, then first contact came and then they actually, the Bushmen sergeants gave me a driver, said this is your driver. Driver's name was Pinto. I'll tell you a story later about Pinto. Bad news.
Interviewer	So now you're there and now you're going operational more and more often.
Dewald	No, no we were still...I never went back to base, I deployed with the people, we deployed into platoons, and then which is important I think is that slowly the traffic on the radio started becoming Spanish. Slowly we saw a new type of boot track. We saw different tins being eaten, different rations being eaten. We had an incident...I had a place at Dongwena, it's a beautiful farm house, the old Portuguese governor stayed in that, and it's got a dam with palm trees and Makalani palm trees and stuff like that. And it was my water hole, it was my place where I bathed and where I relaxed for a day or two. Can we stop? ... <i>break</i>
Interviewer	You were saying that you wanted to correct some of the dates about your first arrival at Omega and then when you were first deployed.
Dewald	Ok, correct. Just thinking back, I started off in Omega end of 1986. 1987 the whole year I was the training commander. And we deployed into Angola in March 1988.
Interviewer	Ok, by that stage you were working there, some of the bigger battles up around Cuito Cuanavale had been on the Lomba River and things like that, they'd been ongoing while you were...
Dewald	Correct. there was a simultaneous war on the eastern side of Angola, the Cuito and Lomba and the Chaminga Highlands, with Operation Hooper and Packer going on at that stage. So I was deployed simultaneously but far to the west area as I explained earlier. And this one operation we started off with the Recces didn't come off and so we were sent in and actually fighting SWAPO as I said, and then the Cuban communication, the Cuban presence became very clear to us in the area. And we

	<p>had many skirmishes with them. we had many little fights testing each other's strength and things like that. At that stage we worked as teams, called it teams, spanne. I normally divided myself between platoon 1, 2, 3, and 4. One week I will be with this platoon and the other week with the other platoon and we had a little contingent at the back at Ruacana at our base listening to all and actually working through all our intelligence and stuff like that. Then I should note that the Cubans were working unconventionally and deployed BM21 rocket launchers in forward post, which is unconventional. That's not part of the Antisa forces doctrines.</p>
Interviewer	Anti-SA is Anti South Africa Forces?
Dewald	<p>Yes, that's what we got trained at our courses in the army college. So we had to plan against an enemy and that enemy was normally for training purposes called anti-SA, but it's purely the Russian Communist doctrine that we planned against. You have to have exercises in who do you fight? You fight anti-SA, so that's why you get red forces and blue forces. Anyhow we might get back to that as well. At a certain stage at this town, this beautiful town called Dongwena, not a very big town, it's not a town, it's a few houses, a school and a church and this governor's house and this nice dam. Corporal Duvenhage, a fat, stocky guy, very strong guy, hit a landmine, and then I knew, this is also not part of this area, there are no mines normally here, and it was a TM57 mine and we had to evacuate Corporal Duvenhage, and then I realised this is becoming a little more serious, a little more conventional.</p>
Interviewer	And at this stage you were being deployed, you're going out in your Buffels and then you're walking foot patrols...
Dewald	<p>Correct. What we did is we deploy...set up a temporary base in a very secure area and then I...or with a platoon commander...I normally left it over to the platoon commander to do the planning of the next day's area and they went out on foot. Sometimes we went out on...depending on information. We had a lot of information. The Cubans didn't have food so they stole the cattle of the local population, that made them the moer in, and then they came running to us and said, but the Cubans were here last night, they raped my wife, and they took my cattle, and they gave us everything we wanted to know. Valuable information about the strength, about their tactics, about how at a certain stage they gave us the length of the trenches, the way the trenches are dug and we learned from anti-SA if the trenches are dug in a certain way and a certain length of trenches, the strength more or less would be like this. So it's things you learn. If you see a BM21 deployed you might find a TM57 tank or two with it. Those are the normal way they operated. But like I said they worked unconventionally. Deployed a BM21 without any support on it. did a few things...but anyway we got all this information back from the local population. And the Cubans set many ambushes for us as well. We managed to get very clever. Because we had this</p>

	<p>valuable source of information from the local population we knew where they were and where they were not, and we had ambush positions where we drove in well dug in, well organised, but emptied. We did a lot of speculative fire. We did a lot of bragging and chasing them. We had...I can show you in my cupboard here many jackets and caps and stuff which just hung in the trees they were shit scared of us. And then maybe our mortar bombings and stuff into the areas. And we never got any bodies at that first initial stages. They used to drag away the bodies. We got many blood and stuff but no bodies. Bodies were normally...and once you find a Mi17 helicopter flying around, then you know they had casualties, the Cubans got priorities, and they fly them out into the hospitals, not driving them like the FAPLA forces. FAPLA forces are left to go onto the back of the Orrel vehicle [Stalin Organ rocket launchers] and it takes you five days to get to a doctor and you'll most probably die there, before he gets there. Then we did a lot of search and destroy operations. We were the eyes and the ears of Serfontein [Brigadier Chris Serfontein the commanding officer of Sector 10} because they suddenly realised there's something going on here and we had to test...once they fired back at us or at night-time we used to move our bases quite often at night, not to become a target. We never slept at one place the one time and with success, many times we saw Mi24 attack helicopters attacking our positions we were last night in, and things like that. And then we could establish that they are firing this type of weapon and they are doing this and they are doing this, valuable information for Swarthand [Chris Serfontein's nickname]. We sent back via Ruacana Five Four Battalion into sector ten zero, which Swarthand Serfontein was the commanding officer of the sector at that stage.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And at this stage, from the tracks that you're picking up, the food cans that have been left around from the vehicles from the helicopters, you're getting the impression that this is mainly Cuban forces?</p>
Dewald	<p>We get the impression because we get the evidence. We saw the caps, we picked up things that's written in Spanish, we've picked up Spanish broadcasting on our radios, we get the local population telling us there are white guys in between the black guys here. And the uniforms we picked up lying around, running off, the caps in the trees and the thorns and stuff, it's all Cuban. It's Cuban uniforms, not FAPLA uniforms. So yes, of course, then we realise that this is something different there. The tracks is new boots, it's not the old stuffed up FAPLA type and SWAPO type of things that we're experiencing here. This is an organised well equipped army we're experiencing. We've been through this, we never had it in the past. So this is something new. Bushmen knew this is another enemy. They could tell you and say, this is 'Kibano'.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Just on a point of clarity, you say the caps in the trees, you're referring to caps that get stuck in the haak en steek when you're</p>

	driving past and things that the guys, the soldiers, lose.
Dewald	<p>Not actually lose, actually running away from contact area. We fired a lot of speculative fire, we did a lot of mortar attacks onto these things. Just by distance and sometimes we could hear them, we could hear their vehicles, the Bushmen who were very sharp with this, they could tell you that's a petrol engine or it's a diesel engine, and it's that type of vehicle and FAPLA's not using that, it must be a Cuban or something like that. And general directions and stuff. So they were elusive, very much elusive, they didn't want to tackle us. They also tested us and what is this force doing here, because we were deployed into four platoons, they can hear a platoon close to Ongiva, then they can hear a platoon close to Cuamato, the next one is close to Cahama, and the other one is Techipa. So they don't know what our strengths were so they were looking for shit but they were too shit scared to confront us directly. So we actually dragged it out of them and said, come fire at us, let us hear what you've got. What is it? Because by hearing and by...not actually seeing, by hearing and establishing what type of weapon they've got, we can establish is it a 'voorspan', is it already a...it's like a checklist in an aircraft. If they've got that, if there's smoke in the cabin, it must be that. So that's how we get taught in our colleges here. And those valuable information we gave back. The caps and stuff is that when we get too close to them, they hear the vehicles, they know that we're going to attack, if they fire one shot at us we're going to retaliate by attacking with a mobile force. So then they didn't want to attack us so we were firing mortars at them. Once we fired mortars and they hear the vehicles coming together, but a thing that I maybe forgot to say is that, at that stage when we got the traffic on their radios is getting picked up so much, I realised that this is not a platoon operation anymore, so I drew in all my platoons and we were again about 16 vehicles running as a company and proper fighting force, but unfortunately light infantry didn't have any big guns. I begged for big guns how many times. I asked them to send me two Ratels at least, or give me these Pannards...</p>
Interviewer	The Eland.
Dewald	<p>Give me Eland 90, one or two. Well they brought my rations and my replenishing of my ammunitions with Ratels and then they left after 15, 20 minutes, and the Bushmen didn't like that. If I had had that, I would have taken on these guys. But my biggest weapon was an RPG7. Later on they gave me two 81mm pipes as well as mortars get a range of maximum 8 kilometres and stuff, but that's not what I asked for. I asked for a little bit more because they are getting more conventional, I can hear tanks, I can hear PT76s, I can see that they're organised and you can hear them the whole night driving around you. So I want to take them out but I don't want to go with an RPG7 there. <i>Laughs</i> I must elaborate on the point that the first, Techipa, was also another of my water holes. Also small little town, similar set up as</p>

	<p>what Dongwena was, also governor's house and things like that, and it had a water hole where I got fresh water from. I never took from the river...almost never took from the river. And they had a lekker water hole, deep one, and it was my water hole. And I was actually on my way to replenish water...then I had two Bushmen with me, two old men, they're called Kandandos. Mathias Yando and Hardegat de Paisa, is the two old men. Now those are the guys that fought with Delville Linford, his days. A lot of experience. And they said to me they can hear the vehicles close to Techipa. So I decided not to go into Techipa yet, and we stopped and we actually formed a whole all round defence, and I got a troop by the name of Abie Digumba to go into the trees like a little ape – he can climb very high. I always used him to be my lookout, he's got sharp ears and he's above the canopy so he can hear much better, there's no leaves. And he sat on the top there. And I decided to send a section, it's a Lieutenant van Biljon, there was a medic troop called... <i>interruption</i> I actually sent out a section, at that very stage I called in all my platoons to come to me and I sent out a section with Lieutenant van Biljon and a medic corporal called Kotze, and a very, very aggressive Bushman called Megenie André, he was a lance corporal. And they went onto this patrol and before they left there's a troop called Mathias Yando...his nickname was spoor portel because he's such a great tracker, and he wanted to go with but he was the platoon's mortar man, the pack mortars, and I said to him, ok fine he can go along but he actually didn't belong to that platoon, he belonged to another platoon, more to my HQ group. And Mathias went and I said to him, take about 12 mortar bombs with you. I just had a bad feeling about this whole area and the vehicles that my Kandandos heard. And then they left. They went down a valley and as they reached the bottom of the valley, they radioed me and said that they've got five very fresh spoor. I said to them, follow the spoor, we'll just establish the direction where this thing is going to, and we can do 'voorspoorsny'. We can jump this spoor. And then later on they said to me, now this spoor grew to 30 spoor. And then they found themselves inside the middle of a kraal with very hostile people sitting around this kraal. And he radioed me and he said to me, this is not looking good. And I said to him, ok, he must slowly just withdraw and we'll meet him halfway, we're going to come in now. As I finish that conversation the explosion started. It first looks like it was an RPG7 and then a lot of mortar explosion, a lot of small arms fire, rapid small arms fire, and the whole contact, as you know how a contact can sound, was just deafening. And then Abie Diguma fell out of the tree there into my Buffel and we just drove off with my driver called Pinto. And we were speeding off into that direction and I had... <i>phone interruption</i></p>
Interviewer	<p>You were saying, when your men were in the village the enemy opened up on them with all sorts of weapons and you jumped into the vehicle with your driver and you were heading off towards where the contact was taking place.</p>

Dewald

Correct. My driver Pinto is not a very good driver. While we were driving, we were speeding over a shona and the two vehicles, I could see them clearly got stuck into the mud, but Pinto managed to get through there. You could just see ammunition boxes and rat packs and stuff just flying out of this vehicle, he drove like a maniac but he eventually got through. And I was on the radio talking to the guys in the contact and Megenie André actually told me that David Kupeka, which is the MAG gunner got killed. Mathias Yando the mortar man I actually gave permission to go with his mortar bombs, he got killed. And he's lost all the other guys. And as we were driving I came across David Kupeka and another guy...anyhow then I picked them up, and as I picked them up, I was actually quite disappointed the way that they ran off out of the contact but then I realised they had no more ammunition. The mad gun of David Kupeka was white hot and I knew that he'd put in a lot of shots. And he told me that he thinks the only person killed at this stage was Mathias Yando because he saw them just firing at Mathias Yando, because he's a mortar man, and he threw very accurate mortars out to these guys, and they all directed their fire towards him. And then we quickly replenished ammunition – I had a lot of spare ammunition on my vehicle – replenished their ammunition and everything, and we sped off into the direction which he now guided us into, very thick bush, very thick. And as we came in another little opening we saw Lieutenant van Biljon, saw Mathias Yando, we saw Corporal Kotze, and they were putting a drip into Mathias Yando. Megenie André came from the northern side towards me, a lance corporal, and he said to me that we must go and get the AKs because he know that he has shot a few people and he wants to claim the guns for points in future. Those years they used to give you points for the battalion and there was a trophy called the Ivory Trophy from sector ten zero, and the battalion that got the most kills and everything, at the end of the year they award that to the battalion, so he wanted to claim those kills. He's a young guy and I saw while looking at Mathias Yando the bad news, Mathias is barely alive. So I said to Megenie André that he must go and get the other guys, because I could hear the contact is going on, so the guys are busy negotiating the enemy and it's Cuban, you can hear the Spanish, you can hear them whistling. They were doing firing and movement with whistles and stuff. You could hear their own vehicles starting up, you could hear the vehicles, it just was just a very tense moment for me. And I had to make a decision. Either we attack, I know that two of my vehicles got stuck at the back, I can't rely on those two sections. I'm one section here, which is part of the guys...it's the Kandandos, it's the old guys that's with me. And then while looking around, walking up and down, I saw that Warmkop de Pisa and my other Kandando is walking off...or actually ran off to the northern side, and joined the fire fight. They were doing so well in the fire fight, they were doing speculative fire, you could hear them, they loved this automatic story and they were firing small little bursts of fire they were firing. And I'll tell you now after that incident those young

guys never looked for any problems with these older guys. I actually had doubted them if they could still fight. They were calm, they were actually attacking the enemy showing aggressiveness and that's actually what stopped them from advancing towards us, and they kept the line to the north while we were working on Mathias Yando. So either side I had to make a decision and I decided this is...I don't know what the enemy's strength is, it sounds like a lot. I heard the news on our radios that it was more than 30, 35 spoor and we could hear enemy so they are replenishing more troops, they're coming in, and we actually threw a lot of mortar bombs in their direction, we had these troops forming a line in the front and we could hear them screaming as well. So we had a lot of kills there, and we had a lot of wounded there, but I wasn't sure, it was too thick the bush and I had to make a decision. So I said to them, right, take Mathias and put him onto the vehicle, and it took us a few tense moments to put him on. And I also saw Corporal Kotze firing into the direction – he had an R4 rifle, and we had R1s at that stage, and being a medic from the medical corps they were issued R4s and we were actually also issued R4s but the Bushmen went about, I think, on one deployment, and we were the only battalion in the South West African war, up to the end, that used R1 rifles. Because the Bushmen didn't trust the small bullet versus the big bullet of the R1s. And we had to actually go through a whole logistical exercise to turn it around and bring back their old R1 rifles. Anyhow we got onto the vehicle and threw a lot of mortar bombs into their direction. The vehicles at that stage stopped, you couldn't hear the vehicles, didn't know where they were. Most probably deployed the reinforcements. And we got onto the vehicle and we were driving south by the speed of white light, and as we were driving, very tense, I saw – thick bush – I saw, it looks like a TM55 tank going past me to the northern direction, I'm going south now, so this vehicle is going past me. And I thought it can't be that...and then I just by looking closely I saw it was Warmkop de Pisa, managed to get his vehicle loose from the mud and he's now on the way to the contact area and we're already now on our way to the southern area, so we just missed each other. Luckily the two Bushmen spot each other and they turned around and followed us, and we were driving off and we could even hear trained dogs barking. But anyhow, we moved off and got to where the vehicle is still lying in the mud. Those guys were deployed to the northern side in an all round defence round this vehicle, they could do nothing. And we really battled for most probably 45 minutes to get that vehicle out of that mud. We did not have any equipment, no kinetic ropes, no tow bars, we had virtually nothing to do it. We dug them out, we used our bumpers to get it out, eventually it got out. But in that specific time I saw Mathias Yando, by then all his intestines were hanging out. He was really shot to pieces and he was barely alive and I knew we've got to get this guy out of here very quickly. So what Mathias...we put an army towel around him, a wet army towel around his intestines, trying to push it back into the position and



	<p>put the army towel around him. And then we got the vehicle loose and Corporal Kotze was sitting with an adrenalin injection to gooi in his heart as soon as he stops. That's for the last resort that we thought that we could do for him. But he managed to keep out and I actually spoke to him while we were driving in this bloody bush, spoke to him and I said to Mathias, is he alright, and Mathias opened his eyes and he looked at me and he's always had that blink in his eye and I still saw that blink in his eye and I knew ok, he will vasbyt. But there was a lot of blood going out of his nose and I thought it was a lung wound. And I actually pinched his nostrils together. I said to him he must blow. And he blew and I saw bubbles coming out of the bridge of his nose, and then I was actually relieved because I knew it wasn't a lung wound, it's a piece of shrapnel <i>laughs</i> that went through his bridge of his nose. And then we came onto a beautiful road running south and we just managed to run five times faster than the Cubans still battling in the bush. So we managed to escape them, get Mathias out, three vehicles managed to be out, and this road opened after about most probably 30 minutes drive, we managed to go into a beautiful shona. Around the one side there's a Portuguese farm house sitting, it looks like a picture from heaven, and it's a beautiful landing strip as well. But by then I'd already radioed Ruacana and I spoke to Lambrechts, I said to him, send me a chopper, this guy's going to die, and he kept on telling me, but we have to be five minutes out of this contact area. Are they still chasing you? This and this and that. I got the moer in because we managed to keep these guys...they most probably were a battalion strength...from our backs. And we will do it...it takes three or four minutes to land an aircraft, and we'll throw him in there immediately and they can take off, it takes them three or four minutes maximum on the ground and landing and going off. And they refused. So then I just lied to him and I said, but we don't even hear their vehicles anymore. There's no more firing, nothing going on. It's all quiet now, they can send the chopper. Now from Ruacana it's most probably about 20 minutes flying time and we brought that chopper in, came in and landed, threw Mathias in there, and off he went. And then we just sort of run more to the eastern side, closer to the Cunene river, from there onwards, from Techipa, and called in the other 3 platoons then joined up with me, and then we were just having a temporary bases and re-planned from there onwards. But it was a hell of a big fight and I know that we gave them a hiding there, a big hiding there because of the shouting and the screaming and the stuff that went on at that stage. <i>Break</i></p>
	END OF SIDE A ( <i>counter at 498</i> )
	SIDE B
Interviewer	When we switched the tape off there you had a memory of one or two other incidents that you wanted to tell me about during that phase of what was happening.

Dewald	Yes, I just need to point out, I don't know if I did it, but the Cubans were doing firing and movement drills, and...
Interviewer	You said that they were using whistles and you could hear them talking and stuff like that.
Dewald	Correct, yes. I just remember that Mathias when we got there to him, he looked very bad. His intestines hanging out of his belly. We fired more mortar rounds into the enemy's direction, could clearly hear them screaming. The old Kandandos finished a few magazines in the direction of the shouting Cubans and we were forming a barrier between the Cubans and the medics. I was amazed how calm they were. They were veterans of old Colonel Delville Linford's A Alpha group during Operation Savannah 1974. They gained a lot of respect from the younger guys after this incident and were a calming factor. I certainly wouldn't doubt their abilities anymore. Some of the Cubans orders were relayed by whistles. We cleared the area to the north. The aggressive nature of Lieutenant van Biljon's attack also made them think twice. Even the medic Corporal Kotze took part in that fire fight. But my thoughts were all on the wounded Mathias, we were seriously short of ammunition by then and we then heard the enemy BTR60 starting up so we loaded everybody and drove down south. When we eventually dragged the Buffel out, I think I've mentioned...
Interviewer	That's the Buffel that was stuck in the mud and you were trying to move it with the bumpers and everything, you didn't have any ikenetic ropes or anything like that so you couldn't tug him out and stuff like that.
Dewald	Correct. I just needed to maybe mention a name here, the person that I normally spoke to at Ruacana, was Major Werner Sott. His father was an old sergeant that I had managed to meet up many years after that, old German Nazi that became a South Africa soldier. Very, very, very good soldier. But Werner Sott calmed me down, he's an ex Three Two Battalion guy and he knew what I was going through. And he actually dispatched the choppers to me to help me out after Colonel Lambrecht told him not to do that. Also to finish this story off, Mathias was stabilised at Ondangwa and flown into One Military Hospital and he remained here for more than three months, but recuperated a hundred percent, but never went on to any other operations after that. Just later years, got killed by Bushman witchcraft in Smitsdrift. Died sadly in Smitsdrift for something completely out of the military context.
Interviewer	So he survived the war and bombs and ammunition but he died a victim of witchcraft.
Dewald	In his bed. There was a whole court case going on about it, and they actually got professors in from Stellenbosch to give evidence for the Bushmen. And they were all let go, because of the evidence given by these professors about...

Interviewer	So at this stage you've got Mathias out by chopper, you called up your other platoons, you'd formed a temporary base out in the bush, and what happened after that?
Dewald	Well, at that stage we moved closer to the Cunene River.
Interviewer	Where it goes north.
Dewald	Actually a little bit further north. It's between a town called Dongwe and a town called Dongwena. We went in there. There were kaplines lying there. And we've planted...well, the Cubans planted a lot of mines there. We had to do mine clearance operations. In one small operation, about three days it took us, we lifted 17 mines, TM57 mines there. And then we suddenly heard from the local population, our main source of information there, that the Cubans are now starting to lift the mines on the road south from Xangongo to Calueque. It's a road going very close to the river up north and then they're taking out their own mines. And then we realised that they are planning to come south with their own mobile forces.
Interviewer	TM57 that's an anti tank mine.
Dewald	It's an anti tank mine, yes. Ok then I reported all this landmine lifting to my immediate HQ at Five Four Battalion and then they dispatched...Five One Recce Commando dispatched two guys to me, a Lieutenant André Odendaal, he's a English Odendaal, and the staff sergeant Menno Uys. Those are two very well known in today's terms, Recce guys. And they came to me...a funny story about the Lieutenant Odendaal is that he was also a 201 Battalion in our Recce wing before he became an operator, then he went for his operator's course, and he told me that his first operation into Angola, he had to take a few Recces up to do certain reconnaissance work and here another company of 201 Battalion is taking him on his first reconnaissance out. We operated on the western side at that stage. We brought these two Recces in to go as a very small team and see what these Cubans are up to. And then on our eastern side east of the river, Echo Company, Lieutenant Duvenhage, was still operating on that side. Now...they had the same tactics directed towards them as the Cubans did towards us but we played a lot of cat and mouse like I said, but they had a group of more than 200 Cubans attacking them one night. They were lying in a temporary base and the early morning they did a reconnaissance around the base before they left, and the reconnaissance operation...or the immediate circle of this patrol around the base was not too far and they were happy that everything's clear and they started the vehicles up, drove into this ambush group of 200 Cubans and the Cubans just let go and shot them to pieces. I remember that... can we stop there? .... I just need to tell you that one night we were north of Dongwena when we were told that a Cuban patrolled regularly...this is an old bulldozer wreck. The locals told us that the Cubans came there every two days or so. We were not meant to operate there, because as I explained, that we

dropped these two Recces off very far north out of an area that we were not supposed to be, and on our way back we were above the 32 latitude and they were not supposed to be there. And I asked for permission to set up an ambush there or to booby trap the whole set up and permission was denied and we lost a golden opportunity there. And then again, I had regular contact with my partner, Lieutenant Duvenhage, with Echo Company on the eastern side of the river. We were talking on a daily basis, we had a (*inaudible*) time, actually we had a frequency, an H frequency, 8558. It's a day frequency. Very clear from 12 o'clock until about before the sun sets, and at 12 o'clock we used to go on this frequency into Omega, speak to Omega, which is thousands of kms away from us, and the Bushmen would talk to...we had a guy we would call the lyn looper. He's a Bushman sergeant of rank and he knows what troop's wife had a baby and who married and who died. They gave all this information through to each other. ...*interruption* what I'm actually trying to say is that we had many talks with Lieutenant Duvenhage on the eastern side of the river, and there for some reason was a grouping running around in our area, called themselves Echo Six Zero, it's from the Coloured Battalion in Cape Town, and they were the big heroes in that area, or they thought, but they were actually penetrating our area, we have planted mines there, a mine hunting team, and they lifted our mines without co-ordinating with us. They were just totally out of line. And the Cubans attacked them, this Echo Six Zero, and I could hear the contact going on, on the other side of the river and immediately asked Lieutenant Duvenhage what's going on? I thought they were in trouble, and he said to me, no, it's not them, they also hear the contact slightly north of them. And I said to him, they must go and investigate and come back to me. And then a squeaky voice came on the radio, it was the platoon commander of that specific grouping, and I said to him, where are you? What was happening? Where's your group? So he said to me, no, he's about six kilometres south of them, he doesn't know where they are. I said, what happened? He said, we were attacked by Cubans and ambushed and he doesn't know what's happening. So Lieutenant Duvenhage went into that contact and actually did very well and did a firing and movement and cleared the whole area, killed many Cubans in that specific spot and cleared the area, recovered all the equipment that was lost by Echo Six Zero, recovered their equipment, took them on their Buffels, and then withdrew to the south. And I actually never came to know how many got killed of this Echo Six Zero. The lieutenant was just a disgrace because how can he just disappear and he doesn't know where his troops is? So to come back to the point, I think 201 Battalion Echo Company did very well there to recover everything back and normalise the situation, chase the Cubans off. But then the Cubans knew about the Bushmen Battalion being in the area, and they wanted to retaliate on the Bushmen Battalion. And then one night I was lying...could we stop there please? ... *break* The job of Meno Uys and André Odendaal

	<p>was completed whereby they tried to...they in actual fact went on the road from Cahama to Xangongo and did physically count the vehicles, and very disturbingly told me when I spoke to them afterwards that they counted more than 3000 vehicles a day going past them. Military vehicles going into just north of Xangongo into the Cuamato area, whereby most probably they gathered all these Cuban forces from.</p>
Interviewer	3000 vehicles a day!
Dewald	<p>3000 vehicles a day. But it was now time for them to come back so I had to radio them...radioed me via their HQ in Ondangwa, said that we can move north and gave me a rendezvous to pick them up. I went to that area and they were not there. Actually they were operating differently in different groups. Very small groups. André Odendaal told me that he measured a bridge being built in progress, by walking over the bridge, counting steps on how far they progressed with building this bridge. André and Meno Uys went further north into the Humbe area and tried to establish where the versaaamel punt, in military terms in Afrikaans, where that was. And I got to pick them up both. First of all I had to pick up André Odendaal. André never answered me on the radio and had his own sked [radio schedules] times and it was all Morse code and everything, and then eventually I managed to pick up his radio communication and I went a little bit more further north, I realised he's slightly off, I had to go a little bit more north, and later on fired a flare and he couldn't see the flare. Again tried and later on exploded a mortar bomb and then he only zeroed in on me and I picked him up. That's when he told me that he measured the bridge. I also think it needs to be noted that André wore big sheepskin shoes, looks like big white sleepers, but huge ones, for anti tracking. You spread your spoor out and it looks completely different. But also with André there was a soldier, a black oke, spoke very good English and I realised, later learned that it's an ex SAS soldier from Rhodesia also, that went with André. Shortly after that I managed to pick up Meno Uys, almost shot him because he looked just like a Cuban. Had to wave at me and then I saw ok fine, this is him now, I didn't expect him at that specific time. Picked him up and he then told me about the more than 3000 vehicles a day going past on that road from Cahama to the eastern side to just north of Xangongo. Then we actually then took them back to the Calueque dam wall. First time in a long time that I'd been back at the dam. Had the chance to wash ourselves and then there was...the dam wall is like I said, it's about 10-15 stories high, it's a huge, huge, massive thing. Once you look at a picture it doesn't look so big but it's a massive, massive operation there. And you go through various things that have been shot up, there's no stairs, you have to climb like a monkey sometimes to get onto the dam. There's a specific stoep overlooking this whole beautiful valley. And we were sitting there with our chairs officer, me Koos Stadler and Meno Uys...well anyhow a few Recce officers were sitting there. Koos Stadler never participated in this operation of course. He</p>

hurt his back doing some mountain climbing and he was used only to be the back officer, but he was stationed at Calueque. He managed to get a bottle of whisky somewhere and we had a nice sip of whisky each of us sitting and relaxing. And you won't believe that, they were looking towards the dam wall, I was looking towards the bush and river and low water bridge and a MiG 23 came past from the southern side, from Ruacana side... a MiG 23 passed us and flew off. And it was a few seconds, I could see it, and I said to the guys there's a MiG 23 just flew past, and they didn't believe me. Nobody heard anything, it's so noisy in there. And I think up to today they don't believe me, but I know what I saw. *laughs* I saw it. And they obviously took air photographs and tested us if we have any anti aircraft ability. Shortly after that, Eugene Weitz, which is the commanding officer of the company there... company commanding officer, Eugene Weitz of 701 Battalion, which protected the dam, broke some pipes off from the inside of the dam wall and put them in the ground and put cammo netting over them and just put dummy anti aircraft guns up there. Which I think was a clever plan but a little bit too late, because photos had already been taken. I later learned that that aircraft actually turned over Ruacana and had a shot at a Blesbok or those little spotter planes. They shot at one of these aircraft. So we went... Duvenhage was also with me from Echo Company, also replenishing fuel. Had a few flat tyres turned over and stuff like that. we replenished our stuff, the Recces was there, they were about to go back to the south and we then were on our way north. I went north, Duvies went on the eastern side of the river, through a place called Nualila, onto the northern side to Cuamato area. And that night I was actually digging in quite deep, wasn't feeling very comfortable around the area anymore. And got the whole company together, made a huge surround all around defence and camouflaged the vehicles and everything. And then my Bushmen, Hardegat de Pisa and the other one, they normally looked after me like my batmen. They normally cleaned my rifle and did a few things like the old officers were used to. Dug my trench for me while I'm busy doing administration work and reporting back certain situation reports and stuff like that, they did that for me. Normally made my food. Then I was actually lying and sleeping inside this trench of mine and a kudu walked past me, and the kudu was making a noise with his knees, like clop clop clop, and I didn't know what the hell it was. And I normally just watch them, if they're unhappy then I know there's something wrong, but if they're happy then I just relax myself, and it didn't bother them at all. And this kudu walked between all those Buffels, all around the defence, and walked into a little pond water pool and drank, making a slurping noise like slurp slurp, drinking water there, then went off again. But then already I wasn't very happy, the whole situation in the area was tense and you could feel it with a stick there's something going to happen. Then the next morning Duvenhage radioed me and told me that he's running on spoor, his Bushmen teams are deployed on the ground and they're chasing these spoor, and they did a cut off

exercise and they gained a few kilometres and picked up the rest of the guys. And I said to him, ok, how many does he think it is? And he says to me, it's about 30-35, like a platoon, running north. So he split up his platoon into...that specifically he was with a platoon...split up the platoon in two vehicles to the south and two vehicles to the north, and they eventually went, and the one was driving south on the road, on quite a good road, driving south, and him himself was driving north with two other platoons. And they managed to get this group in the middle. And unfortunately no good communication, he says to the one group, you take the left, I take the right, and both to them it's left and right, means that they're going to the same direction now. So they actually went away from the river and many of these guys escaped through the river. But they managed to shoot five or six there, and one got killed in a mud hut. They threw a phosphorous grenade in there. He got killed in there. And also the Bushmen complained very much because Corporal van der Merwe – he got killed in action shortly after that – a medic corporal was with him deployed, and that medic corporal, with his R5 at that stage, shot a Cuban that was running away, apparently he was quite a fat oke, and just hit him once or twice, and stumbled over his feet and got up and just ran off into the river and disappeared. And the Bushmen were not happy about that weapon either. But Duvies and them because of miscommunication they actually missed another golden opportunity to kill more of these Cubans. And then the Cubans became the moer in with them, and they... can we stop here? ...*break* I think I just need to, after the incident whereby Lieutenant Duvenhage killed those Cubans, that being new and a young officer, and also we were in our battalion we were competing with kills as well. Also a trophy at the end of the year. He thought that I would not believe him and he put these Cuban bodies onto the grilles of his Buffel, and he made the mistake by driving them down to the tar road on the south, the road between Oshakati and Ruacana, turned right and went to Hurricane base with this. And just to show the people but he actually did shoot these Cubans. And they got in a hell of a problem with that. They didn't know what to do with these bodies. Do they bury them? What do they do with them? I actually don't know what happened to those bodies at the end of the day, but he came back...funny story about this also is that, we used to do a braai, we shoot...there's many cattle running around there, wild cattle of 1974 still running wild, and we shoot occasionally once or twice a week, we shoot for our own rations and we used to braai them on the Buffels grilles, and now he had the bodies on the grilles, and the guys...you sometimes have guests and you don't tell them that you had a body on there, you just keep on braaing. Later on you tell them, listen just about two days ago we had a few Cubans killed on the grilles, and they didn't like it at all afterwards. *Laughs* But I should tell you that this was the first part of the contacts that started on the eastern side of the river, was this after Duvenhage and them chased this group of about 35, a platoon of Cubans. The latter incident happened because of

the Cubans retaliating and now looking for these guys that gave them such an uphill, and then they attacked Duvenhage at that specific incident whereby they had a temporary base and walked out of that base. And I actually don't think that I've actually completed that story, but what I want to tell you, the second incident that happened with Duvenhage, the first incident was the Echo Six Zero, whereby they shot the Cubans away from this Coloured Battalion. The second one was coming from the south to the north from Calueque into Naulila, and from Naulila north to Xangongo they experienced this 35 spoor, and then the next day or two or three after that, they went into a temporary base. The Cubans knew where they were, and then the Cubans attacked them, just moving the very early morning out of this temporary base. And then the contact started, it was more than 200 Cubans fired at them from a very close range. They actually drove into them by accident. They could have driven to a western direction they would have been safe. But they drove into this group of enemy, and the first Buffel got shot out. There was Duvenhage's brother was inside that Buffel. And a troop by the name of Petrus Wama was inside the Buffel, and obviously the rest of the people was inside. They instantly killed Wama and the Buffel started burning and Duvenhage and the rest of the troops jumped off and started firing back and keeping the Cubans low. The other three Buffels all got hit, all got flat tyres, the windows got shot out with RPGs and it was a big mess. Duvenhage commanded these vehicles to drive out of the contact area, flat tyres, it doesn't matter, just get out and go south. And many of the troops stayed on these vehicles because there's no time to get off, it's just something that happened. And they were driving out and so he lost a lot of fire power by these guys going to the southern direction. So he remained behind himself, Duvenhage. His brother, Dik Duvies, and three troops remained behind. And at the burnt out vehicle...forgot to mention that on that vehicle also was Corporal van der Merwe, the medic corporal. And then the Cubans went to this vehicle and wanted to start this vehicle and kept on pushing the hooter instead of the starter, and then they were laughing around. And then Duvenhage and them opened fire...they were lying very close by in a ditch, and they were firing at them. And then it's quiet for a while and then they start with their crap again. But the vehicle was in the meantime burning, the whole bin was shot off...I can show a very good photo of that...the ammunition that was at the back of it ignited the whole vehicle and it started burning. And Petrus Wama was on that vehicle, van der Merwe was on that vehicle, and they didn't know what's happening. So that's why Duvenhage stayed behind. The rest of the troops were recuperating and replenishing ammunition and stuff at the back there a few kilometres away at that stage. So they were kept on firing and they kept on firing back to Duvenhage and them. They fired small Strims [rifle grenades] from the AK 47s, and with anti personnel heads, and luckily Duvenhage had told me that luckily those Strims all went over their heads...he called it small little mortars, went over their



heads and exploded at the back of them, they couldn't aim very well with this. But many exploded in front of them and they got shrapnel wounds in the head, all five of them had been wounded. But they managed to escape eventually out of this and the Buffel was then burning there. Before they escaped out of it they actually put up such a hell of a fire fight they ran out of ammunition, and the Cubans also saw that they're not going to give up this Buffel, they rather leave. So they actually withdrew, the whole Cuban group withdrew, and Duvenhage decided that this vehicle is burning, they will not be able to drive it, I rather join up with the rest of my platoon, my company. And he had eight wounded... Duvenhage always had a medic kit – he's a fine soldier – always had a medic kit with him, with everything. You can call it Sossegon (pain killer) how to put in stitches, everything that you need possibly, bomb bandages and all of that he's got it there. Syringes and alles. So he patched up all these guys that got seriously injured and called in the choppers and they came in... and I'm going to come back to this story now, where I got involved because that's actually when I woke up that night by Mathis, no sorry, Yutas Diundu is my Kandando... he called me and said to me that he can hear the firing going on and he saw a green flare going, and he woke me up. And I put on the radio and I heard Duvenhage speaking to Werner Sott in the ops room in Ruacana, and Werner asked him, confirm all 8 is Bushmen. And then I lost communications and I didn't know what the hell is going on. And then I realised that I was on the day frequency and I should move over to a 2... starting with a 2445 or something a frequency which is a night frequency and then I clearly heard Duvenhage and I said to him, you vasbyt there, you standby, I'm coming through to you. But for me to get to him takes me a day. I have to drive down about a hundred kilometres to the south, around Calueque dam, have to replenish, then go up Naulila and then up to him. so I said to him, don't worry I'm going to come don't worry I'm going to come and fetch you there, and I'll see what we can do... And then I woke up all the people. I actually when the whole shit started I left them to sleep and I only had the guards out. And I left all my officers to sleep and my NCOs, because I knew that tomorrow morning we're going to have a shit day and I want them to be fresh at least. And then it was about four o'clock in the morning, I woke them up, I said come, get all the guys ready, let's go. Go in a convoy to the south, I know I can clearly remember it was overcast, I couldn't see the stars, I was disorientated, I was actually at the time thinking that we were moving to the north, then the Bushmen assured me and I trust them very much. Go down south, the sun was just about out, we replenished fuel there, no pump working at Calueque so we had to take our steel helmets and put diesel and it takes a lot of time. I told Duvies and them that they must vasbyt I'm coming. Eventually got replenished, went up north and met up with Duvenhage – I've got a photograph of that – when I saw him he came to me and cried and I could see that around here a lot of lead was flying. It was a dense bush and we

	<p>suddenly opened into a clearing and that clearing was caused by firing rifle fire. And the trees were broken down and it's not by riding a vehicle over it, it's just lead flying around. And I knew that Duvies had had it. He's just had it...he had enough. And it was a very, very tense time for him but he did very well. Him and his brother and the three Bushmen that was with him, I think deserves an Honoris Crux. Because what had eventually happened when I got to him that morning – he hasn't slept or nothing – from that morning on he went back to the vehicle, got the whole company together, managed to get the vehicle back, the vehicle was burnt out, had to scrape out Petrus Wama, his body was lying inside there. Bushmen did a 360 around the vehicle and managed to find the web belt and shirt of van der Merwe. The web belt had a shot at the back where it comes together here, where all the blood vessels at your lower back, right in the middle there was a bullet wound through there. So he knew that he wouldn't have made it. He actually consulted with an Oshakati doctor, said to him, the wound should be there, what's the chances? The doctor told him he doesn't think there's going to be a chance that he will be alive. Got his shirt and everything, went to look for him, couldn't find him. In the whole history of Three One Battalion, 201 Battalion, there was never any other race than Bushmen, Vaskella or Barakwena Bushmen, in that battalion. There was only later from 1986, there was only three coloured guys from Cape Town that joined the battalion. And one of them was called Kleingeld. Now Kleingeld was also on that Buffel that got shot out. And Kleingeld ran 54 kilometres to the south. They thought Kleingeld is also taken by the enemy. Kleingeld said he came to a base called Manene – it was a police base at that stage – came to Manene, told the story to the police and said to them that everybody's killed. Not me I'm lucky I wasn't killed. His pinky was shot off and he lost quite a lot of blood because of that, but when he got...it wasn't long, about three or four days after that he got collected again and so he wasn't the big hero he thought he was. Everybody's alive besides the two guys, Petrus Wama and that...Then we received orders from Ruacana that we have to recover that Buffel. How do you recover a Buffel that's burnt out, standing in two, three feet thick sand? You can try and pull it out, the sand just moves up against it and it blocks and breaks...</p>
Interviewer	<p>Why would they want you to recover a vehicle that has burnt out and useless to everyone?</p>
Dewald	<p>It's not the only one I recovered, you will see my story later on how many did I recover. The most stupid thing I've ever, ever seen. I think it's because of propaganda getting used against us. Because in another incident we lost a Buffel which I saw at later years in the fort in Angola in Luanda, standing there my Buffel. Same with the Casspirs that got lost, also standing there. Same with the tank that got lost at Tumpo also standing there. I think that's because of that propaganda, it's just something proudly South African I think. But they wanted it to be recovered, I asked</p>

	<p>them but it is worth nothing, we should leave it here. kept on saying to me I have to recover it. I remember there was a Samil 100 diesel tanker at Calueque, and I radioed for the diesel tanker to come with an escort back to me. because I know the power of that engine and although it's not a hard vehicle, it's a soft skinned vehicle, I can at least use the power. So what I eventually did is I hooked it on to a Buffel and the Buffel got hooked on to the Samil 100 diesel bunker and we managed to pull that thing out, and we managed to get it onto the road after about two or three kilometres...got onto the road and from there onwards we just went south. Pulled this thing, there's no wheels on it...the wheels were there but no tyres on it, burnt out and was just swerving around at the back of us, and eventually passed through Nualila onto Calueque. Stopped at Calueque and received the order to destroy the vehicle at Calueque. After all that trouble I went through, more than two days battling to get that thing out of there, I'd been hammered with MiG sorties, there was choppers in the air which wasn't ours. I didn't like it at all. But anyway, so we put a lot of PE4 into it and blew it into the river, and just destroyed it there.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But it took you two days...it's a distance of, from where you found the Buffel, back to Calueque, it's how many kilometres?</p>
Dewald	<p>From where the incident happened to Calueque, it's about a hundred kilometres...ummm, slightly less, about 75 kms.</p>
Interviewer	<p>So it took you all that effort and all that time just to blow it up and throw it into the river.</p>
Dewald	<p>We came to Duvenhage quite late that first evening, it took us the whole of the next day to...but now I'm talking two days when I started up on the western side, going down south, going up...</p>
Interviewer	<p>But now at this time, you're doing all this, are there any other units in the area who could help you? You were in constant radio contact with your rear bases and your commanders, was anybody else operating in that area?</p>
Dewald	<p>In that area at that specific time it was Charlie company, no I'm sorry, Delta Company of 201 Battalion, it was Echo Company of 201 Battalion, it was A Company of 701 Battalion Katima Mulilo. We had that Echo Six Zero jokers in the area. and we had 101 which was on my eastern side closer to Ongiva. Very far from us, we couldn't have called on them to bring us in. We were also with 10 Armour Division. They had these Eland 90s. They were in the vicinity. And we had a mortar group of 7SAI Battalion there, which was static actually at the dam wall. That was the group in the area that specific time.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Ok, but now at this stage it's quite clear that things are building up. When you were trying to recover the vehicle you've got MiGs flying sorties over you, you've got helicopters that are clearly not South African, so things are building up quite rapidly now.</p>

Dewald	Mmm.
Interviewer	So after this incident with recovering the Buffel and so on, what was the next sort of phase in developments?
	END OF SIDE B ( <i>counter at 525</i> )
	TAPE THREE SIDE A
Dewald	<p>I forgot to tell you about, as we were driving south there were two Impalas flying north on this road. I kakked myself I tell you, I thought it's the MiGs coming in again and it was the South African forces. It's hard to explain how tense you are, you've got to get this bloody vehicle out. ... After that incident we obviously had a nice rested bath at Calueque dam wall and replenished our ammunition and flat tyres, fixed them up and guys had a wash and they normally take about a day to get back to normal, we replenished fuel and everything. And then we went...because of the wounding of Lieutenant Duvenhage and his brother, which were key figures in that specific company, they were evacuated south to Ruacana and then later on I think back to Oshakati. And then the South Africans decided...our leaders from the south decided that we should now operate in two companies and I will be becoming the company commander of the two companies. So both the Echo Company and Delta Company formed almost a battalion and we went up north. So I took over Duvenhage's company, we evacuated the eastern side of the river, and left it to be taken by, I think, a squad of 101 Battalion, Ben Venter and his guys. they came into that vacuum at Cuamato. We withdrew the Echo Company to the western side and they operated with me. And we were again going about looking for shit, trying to find, get information, fire speculative rounds into the area and see what we can receive back, playing cat and mouse with these Cubans. And that carried on for quite a while and it went actually very well. The vehicle movements and everything went off smoothly. Never lost a vehicle, never lost another mine incident, we became very clever, didn't drive on the mined roads, had our own way of doing things there.</p>
Interviewer	And at this time is there Cuban air sorties being flown over you with either jets or choppers?
Dewald	Yes. We had many choppers visual in our area. We experienced speculative fire from MiG 24s in areas that we have slept in the night.
Interviewer	MiG 23 or the Hinds?
Dewald	Yes, the Hind Mi 24s So the Hinds came in, fired speculative fires into little islands into shonas where they thought we were. We actually had them visual firing at places that we slept about two days ago. They followed the spoor there. I remember an incident whereby we had three MiGs flying to the south, we could hear them and I warned the guys in Oshakati, we could hear them on the river flying south, and I warned the guys at the dam

	<p>specifically first, and then we warned the guys at Ruacana and said, there's something coming there. And then when they returned back, we had...went very high, much higher, they actually went south, they went very high...and out of this formation of three MiGs we saw one diving down, and the SAAF guys told me if that happens they've got your visual, and they actually bombed us. And the bombs, it's cannon fire, 30mm cannon fire, and also if they use cannon fire they've got your visual. So they actually just overshot at about 200-400 metres from us. We had OPs put out the observation post, almost killed those guys. And then actually we just saw after burners and it just went off. I actually got a piece of that shrapnel here today that I picked up from the cannon fire. But never came close to firing accurately...if you say close, 400 metres is uncomfortable close, and it's very noisy as well. So that we've experienced quite often. We've experienced especially at that stage, we experienced much of Hind 24s and MiG23s. At night time you could hear us flying. It was reassuring that we can hear the guys coming from the south flying to the north and then returning back again. So that we could hear and could not see because they don't fly with lights on then.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Were the South African aircraft, jets, flying up to Cuito or were they flying over your region?</p>
Dewald	<p>Our region, very far from Cuito. They most probably...I'm not very sure where they dropped whatever they went to do. They flew high in a northern direction, more north western direction, so it could be Cahama. Could be Lubango, I don't know. We never heard explosions, we just heard them coming back. One more incident that I remember, the Bushmen warned me, there was a lot of wind blowing through the trees and I couldn't hear. The Bushmen they hear through that wind and they came to warn me, said that not too far from us they can hear the Ochirrichirri, the sound that the tanks make on the tracks. They can hear the Ochirrichirri. And I thought by myself, maybe they're scared or something but I can hear nothing, and later on I actually could hear them, and I could hear them changing gears and I could hear a force...at that stage we were slightly, about 10 kms, to the east of Techipa, doing normal patrols in the area with the eyes and the ears of Oshakati actually. And it's also during that phase where I asked, please guys, I can hear these things running around here, give me something bigger, give me a 90mm Ratels so that we can take them on. I can't with my RPG7 even try and be aggressive towards these guys. A tank is a demoraliser of note. And then they come and bring me my rations and my ammunition and replenishing my fuel, takes them an hour or two with me, the Ratels, then they move off again. I was very pissed off that they don't keep them here. Why do they escort our ration trucks? Why don't they give them to me to fight? And the Bushmen also, they wanted to riot one day when they saw these guys going off, they were very, very glad when the Ratels came in, and thought that ok, now we're going to take them on. And</p>

	<p>then they left with the ration trucks. So it was one of the things that pissed me off and at that specific day it was clearly, I remember, it was very tense and it was tanks, I could hear them, I could hear the Ochirrichirri very clearly. And we deployed to the north of us, we had everything, we were waiting for them with RPG7s, clocked together, we tried if we do spot one we'll shoot five at a time, maybe we can stop these tanks. And we were quiet and then one troop, he was a guy from Echo Company, he wasn't a Bushman...he was a Gwawa. A Gwawa comes from the Eastern Caprivi. And for some reason he became a soldier and he fired off a shot. And jesus and I knew that that shot, if I can hear it as clear as this, that shot could be heard by that enemy as well. And we had to pack up and we had to move a little bit more south just to be safe because we couldn't face the tanks.</p>
Interviewer	Was this at daytime or night-time?
Dewald	<p>Daytime. And then it became towards the end of our trip. We normally deployed six weeks out, six weeks back. It became much more intensive so we went six weeks out, two weeks back. You normally flew in and flew out. And then that specific trip became 11 weeks out. And so we're actually reaching our time that we now have to leave. And the Bushmen are also getting very...they're very closely bonded families and they're getting worried about their families, they being away for so long, they all wanted to go home. We actually had a very tense time playing cat and mouse and there we were feeling like it's now time to be replaced by fresh troops. And we drove south on our time, called in and said ok fine, the next day we would have handed over to a company from 101 Battalion, Charlie Company, at Calueque dam wall. We would have then given all our ammunition and all our maps and everything over to them, and I had a briefing actually on the dam wall with Captain Snakes Snyman. An excellent soldier from 101 Battalion. Company commander of that grouping from 101 Battalion. When I saw 101 there with Casspirs, they had 20mm cannons on their vehicles, much better equipped than what I was, so I was feeling happy for them, and we were actually busy on the dam wall handing and taking over...actually had a bath there and everything, and these guys deployed to the north after my briefing to Snyman. I actually warned him, the tactics, I gave him everything that I know, and which I accumulated over the 11 weeks of knowledge. I said to him don't do this, don't do that, watch out for this, watch out for that. And well he took note and I gave him all my maps, I had a lot of intelligence marked on the maps, and handed it over to him. and then they went off north, there's two little hills on the northern side of the Calueque dam wall. I was on the top of the dam wall and I could see them going out towards the northern side on the old road to Dongwena. And can we stop there...</p>
Interviewer	You just said that you were in the process of the change over, your guys had been taken out for fresh troops. You'd just seen 101 heading back into your turf, you'd briefed their captain and

	told them about what you'd learned over the last 11 weeks, what not to do, what to do, and so on.
Dewald	<p>After I saw Lieutenant Snake Snyman, they moved off to the north and I was still enjoying myself preparing to go home C160, at Calueque dam wall, and from there onwards we would have gone to Hurricane base – most probably demarked at Hurricane base and then would have gone back home. A Bushman called me from the top of the dam wall and said to me that he can see black smoke not too far from us and that he can hear shots. Me being in that noisy environment couldn't hear it, so I went up to the dam wall and I saw the smoke on the horizon. That was most probably about 24-30 kilometres from us. I immediately went to the radio part of 701 Battalion, got on to the radio, and as I actually approached the radio I could hear Snakes talking to somebody and I interfered and said to Snakes, what's happening here? And Snakes told me that they've hit a huge ambush. And while he was speaking to me, they shot his vehicle out as well. Snakes was in the turret handling the 20mm gun, and he told me later when I spoke to him, he said to me that he could actually see the Cuban in a fox hole sitting with his RPG7 tightly fit into this hole, and as they went past him he got up and aimed at them with this disposable RPG7, five type, aimed at him, and he knew that they were going to get hit, and he was turning this turret but the arc of fire was just to the right of this guy. Couldn't shoot him, and he fired and it penetrated the Casspir, it was a white troop sitting on the left side of him, he got shot right through and the shot went through the steel, through him, and some of the shrapnel hit Snakes in the buttocks. They managed to...the vehicle immediately started burning, but I'll come to that story again. So Snakes told me on the radio that he's been hit, it's bad, they ran into a huge group of Cubans. And I immediately thought by myself that this is a new recruit company, this Charlie Company 101 Battalion, they want kills, they saw these spoor, not clever like us with 11 weeks experience, immediately chased these spoor, they led them right into the ambush. And we had experienced the same but we never went into those ambushes, purely because of our experience. They were new, keen for kills, went in and got stuffed up. And I knew, and I immediately called my leader group together and I said to them they must get the troops out of the river, and everybody must bomb up and get as much as possible ammunition ready, we are going to go north now. So we took quite a long time, frustrating a long time because again the pump didn't work to pump the diesel into our tanks and we had to use all...later we started digging a hole, drove the vehicle in the hole and used gravity to get these vehicles filled up. I complained about it many times but Lambrechts but nobody helped me out on that. But eventually we were fuelled up and went north. And suddenly we had on our flanks a chopper Alouette on our right hand flank and an Alouette on our left hand flank. And they were flying in circles all around us. So they were protecting us as we sped off back into the Dongwena area again. As I approached closer to the Dongwena</p>

area I started picking up the troops which ran off the contact area, coming to our vehicles. I picked up a young white corporal which small finger has been shot off. He had blood all over his face, I thought he had a face wound then I realised it was blood from his little finger, and picked him up and he actually guided us more towards where this actual contact took place. And then I picked up Snakes Snyman as well, he was on the ground at that stage. And we tried to get all the 101 Battalion troops together, and become some fighting group of sorts. Snyman didn't know where his troops was, he didn't know where his vehicles was, it was a dense area and chaos when they started firing at them. We later managed to get four to five Casspirs, I'm not quite sure on the figure, managed to get four or five Casspirs back towards us and I actually put them more to the northern side with their 20mm cannons to protect us from any advances, whoever wants to come and look for shit. And I actually pulled under the trees and called for air support, and they told me there's no air support. There's MiGs in the air so our guys are not going to fly. But luckily they lied, and I only realised that after very heart stopping moments, that when I looked up through the sky, first of all I heard a hell of explosions, multiple, just north, about 700 metres north of us. And I thought, I don't understand that type of weapon, what's happening here? And then I heard the aircraft pulling off, schhwoo schhwoo, and they were throwing flares out, and the one shouted on the radio, and I was actually at that stage in a Casspir, they had better air to ground communication on the A72 radios. And the one pilot said to the other one, stop throwing flares, let's fuck off. And then I realised, but this is not Cubans, this is our guys. And I was quite happy that they intervened on our behalf after we thought that it's not going to happen. So whatever advances these guys had they pulled out. The choppers that followed us, one chopper went up very high and he said to me that to the north western direction he can clearly see vehicles driving with a hell of a speed, rushing out of this contact area, going towards Techipa. So I said to him, take it out. I actually ordered him to follow that vehicle and take it out. Which he didn't do. Then he claimed that he saw 14 5 ground fire, and they are shit scared our pilots about 14 5 ground fire. That he's not going to do that, it's too dangerous. They later on left...the choppers left the area and it became quiet and got Snakes with me and Snakes tried to get his people together and they used another frequency which I didn't have, so he had to speak to all his guys together, and they realised that...I think, it was 4 Casspirs is gone, and they're missing a lot of troops. And I tried to calm him down and then we decided that we are going to go a little bit more south to regroup because we are actually on the edge of the town. I could see the buildings, I could see a vehicle burning in the distance, its black smoke running out of it. And we went south and as it was becoming dark, as we were...our last vehicles that followed was 101 guys because I deploy them more to the north of us just to protect us with their 20mm cannons, so they fall into the last bit of the tail of our convoy now going to the



south. So the last vehicle said to us, it was the sergeant major or the sergeant or somebody, which I relied on and he had the radios to talk to me in the front, and he said to me that he can spot lights, lights are following then at a dashing speed. And I thought, hell they're going to chase us now, it's going to get dark. And immediately stopped and I ordered all our RPG7s. Now Mike, I must tell you, I've never seen so many RPG7s directed at one point in my life. I had most probably about 20 RPG gunners, each one had a bagful of RPGs at the back of it, and they dug in quickly next to the road and they were ready for these guys if they come. We would have hit the first vehicle and then they would have given us more chance to escape. And they just didn't turn around that corner, we waited for them. They stopped just before that and they went off back again. So I left the RPG gunners there and I went a little bit south. And I knew that we had to take this town back again. And I had all sorts of inputs from Leon Lambrechts on the radio asking me to attack from the north western side and I referred him back to the pink logs, the oorlog dagboek. I said to him, go and read, what did I say about any movement in the north western side. Then he asked me to move from shadow to shadow.. stupid things that he suggested that I should do. Echo Victor, Eddie Viljoen, came on the radio on my Hopper settings...don't know how they do it but he came in...and he said to Lambrechts to stand by and he spoke to me. He said to me, what's your feeling about this whole thing? I said to him, listen, I'm not feeling comfortable here. The Bushmen claim to hear tanks in this area and I'm quite sure that it's not PD76s, it could be tanks because we heard them a few days ago as well. So he said to me, ok you're on the ground, you decide what you want to do, give me feedback a little later. So I called Snakes Snyman in, he was busy with his troops. We called both battalions in, Echo and Delta Company of 201 Battalion, Charlie Company 101 Battalion. Sitting next to each other here. A sight I will never forget. The Bushmen were packed into lines of six and they were standing around, very disciplined. Asked them to sit and they went to sit down quiet. The 101 troops were disorganised, didn't want to listen to me calling them to sit down, a lot of them were missing, a lot of them have got no kit or burned out in vehicles that are still captured by the enemy. So eventually Snakes got them to quiet down and sit down, and I made a quick appreciation inside the Casspir with Snakes that we are going to attack this town tonight depending on the moon – we were waiting for the moon to rise at about 11 o'clock, and then we'll take the town back. But I relied on him to give me a company of 101 Battalion. So I worked my plan out to have Delta Company to the left front, Charlie Company 101 to the left flank, and Echo Company of Duvenhage of Three One Battalion as a reserve at the back. And this was like we say in Afrikaans, it's a lineare nagaanvaal, we were planning to do. I had never done something like that, although I had training and we did some night training with a similar thing. Then we started moving and the plan was to attack with this front. The front would have been about a

kilometre long, each troop about five metres to ten metres apart, in a stretched out line. And we would have walked and we would have stopped, and we would have utilised Patmores, our patrol mortars, which is a 60mm mortar, and fire ahead of us, if there's anything ahead of us, might run away or get damaged and then we'll pick up and we'll walk for another 100-200 metres and we'll repeat this whole process of firing mortars in front of us as we progress. At that stage I was given two mortar pipes, 81mm mortar pipes of 7 SAI. I earlier mentioned that 7 SAI was lying at Calueque dam wall for protection and they were allocated to me, detached to me, and I actually left them where we started from and they fired much longer range than our Patmores and I just had to direct them with, draaie and swaaie, get the pipes into the right direction. And I actually gave them target indication, as we were progressing and said ok, give me, twee swaai to the right, and they'd gain another hundred metres to the right. And as we continued in getting closer my target indication was a burning vehicle in the far distance on the road. So I could see the glare, I knew more or less that they've actually moved off to the north eastern side of the town, so I could gooi them on that side of the town. Kept them busy actually. So we were going and going and then we realised these bombs are exploding very close to us. The mortars. And I stopped and I called the guys... I had platoon sergeants at the back of this line and I called them in, what's going on here, here we are, I could sometimes feel the shrapnel hitting the vehicle because me and Snakes were driving in the middle axle on a vehicle to have better communication and we had a gunner on the 20mm cannon as well. So I said, what's happening? He says, no the Bushmen, they throw away the charges. Normally the contacts are so close, you don't need more charges and heavier weight to carry, so they throw that away, they use only the primary charge in the middle and that will give you about, I can't remember, about a hundred metres I think it goes out. So we would be throwing a hundred metres in front of us all the time. So we had to carry on with that, we had to do that. And I can still remember Warmkop de Pisa... long story about him I can tell you... but Warmkop was walking here next to me, he didn't even have a rifle with him, he's got his RPG7 and this huge bagful of rockets here at the back of him. That's why they called him Warmkop de Pisa, when he starts shooting that thing he just doesn't stop. He can't hear you, he doesn't want to stop. We had a contact west of Ongiva whereby Three One Battalion shot out 43 vehicles in that contact, and Warmkop, they had to go and fetch him between those vehicles, he was just shooting beer trucks and everything. They had to take him by the... *laughs* you must go now. he was just enjoying himself. But now I see Warmkop walking here, and Warmkop actually stopped me and showed out to me on the ground that there's... it looks like a bulldozer just turned around, you can clearly see the marks as it spun around and went back again. And then I realised, it's actually, it's a road that goes, there's a tree in the middle of the road and it's years and years, it's either you drive right hand side

or left hand side, it forms a little island, and that tank was inside that little island and I knew that these guys has got tanks, there's no way that we're going to attack at night if there's tanks if we don't have anything to counter the tanks. So I radioed my friend there at Ruacana ops room...most probably having a tea and stuff there...so I radioed and said to them that we have a problem here with tanks. He says to me, there's no tanks here. I said to him, I see the tracks. I actually took an AK47 and I measured from the beginning of the barrel up to the curve of the magazine, that's how big and broad that track was. So it's not a PT76. He says to me it could be a PT76. I said to him, no, the indication on the ground doesn't show it's a PT76. And again luckily, Echo Victor came on the radio and said to me, but you decide on the ground what you're gong to do. And I decided just to pick up sticks, turn around and go back. But I neglected to tell you that, as we were approaching...now we must remember, we're about 600-800 metres from town, from the outskirts of town. As I look to my right hand side, where 101 Battalion they're forming that flank, there's nobody there. All the 101 guys disappeared. Slowly while we were doing all these mortar firings and avanza and stopped and set up and fired again and got the back, the 81 mm mortars to fire, 101 slowly disappeared. Then I realised these guys, they're not fighting fit. Not today, they've just been through a hell of a fight. I can't expect them now to...they are young recruits and they don't have the heart. So I had to redo this whole thing, those guys, I'm not sure, I think they only gave me 56 troops. The rest were wounded or were just missing in action. And I had to replenish them with my Echo Company guys. So we took about an hour to get that right, in night time to get these guys now to form a reserve and these guys now to go out about five hundred metres in dark and then we started off and walked off again. I wasn't very happy with these guys because we actually went there to help them. Not us. We were supposed to be on the flight back to Omega. And anyway...then I decided to move back, we dug in that night, very good, dug in and we were actually waiting for that stage for the moon to rise at 23h00. And then they also promised me they are sending me recovery trucks. I was waiting for those trucks to come up from Calueque up north because I knew that I could see some of the vehicles burning there and I wanted to grab them and get out with these...I thought it's going to be Withings. [an armoured recovery vehicle] They send me a Bulperd. Bulperd is twice the size of the Withings. A huge house, you must try and camouflage that thing. Luckily there was a few Sappers that came along as well and they had cammo nets and stuff with them, so we could camouflage the stuff for the morning. And also luckily that we did it because the MiGs were swarming over us the whole day, and I could actually just watch them through the cammo net. And then we decided to send a Recce group, there was a lieutenant there with me, that we sent out, he was my company second in command, excellent soldier, Englishman, very brave. He took a few of my better reconnaissance people and went into

	<p>Dongwena. Remember they now had about 8 kms to do to get to Dongwena to check out what's happening there, can we come in with a whole force? I decided to get everybody ready, just wait for his instructions. So he came back with the reconnaissance. As they were progressing he gave back to me that...on the right flank we see this and we see that and eventually they entered town and gave me a report and said, many bodies lying around here, not drawing any fire, looks to be ok. And when he said that to me I got the guys up and we actually did the same type of exercise just with vehicles, now trying to gain some speed before the MiGs come back again. So we drove in there with a little bit of speed, deployed 101 to the north of the town, used their 20mm cannons, and then we started clearing up the objective. Thousands of rounds of ammunition, webbings, caps, you name it, was there. But only that morning there was Hinds 17s flying in and out. We could see them through the camionettes coming in and they most probably took all the bodies away there. A lot of blood. What happened is that 101 Battalion was following the spoor of these...very excited about the spoor, followed it, the spoor went haywire at a certain spot, they didn't realise but this is the ambush area, and the Cubans dug in three rows of trenches. Now normally, 101 learn this from Koevoet, they call the thing, they call a <i>mal</i>. So once they get into the contact they drive right around these enemy and fire to the inside and kill. So immediately when they drew fire, what happened actually is the guys were on the ground looking at this spoor and then the first shots went off. And they killed some of the 101 troops and the rest just had to quickly drive out of this dead...what do you call it, the doods akker...</p>
Interviewer	The killing zone.
Dewald	<p>Out of the killing zone. They had to drive out. But being this <i>mal</i> thing that they had in their head is, they immediately went aggressively to the left, actually drove over two or three or four maybe more, I saw a lot of blood inside the trenches, they just trapped them in the trenches. And thought that ok fine now they're through this ambush, then the second wave hit them, and then the third wave hit them, so they surprised these guys. And they also had those little fox holes whereby they just squeezed into this thing and then when they get up they put the RPG over the shoulder and they shoot at these vehicles. So total chaos. Not expected tactics, not expected from the Cubans, and got hit, the vehicles started burning, some of the vehicles just drove out into a certain direction just to get away from it, many flat tyres, and it's at that stage when Snakes radioed me and told me that they've been hit. And as he was speaking to me he also got hit on the side with the RPG. That guy that got hit was a lance corporal and the round of the RPG went straight through the armour and straight through him as well. And Snakes told me that he lived for quite a long time but he had a hole as big as his head through his whole body, and he managed to still talk to him, and assured him that we will not be left behind, he shouldn't worry</p>

about it. After that there was also choppers coming in and took away the wounded. Before I actually got him, on my way while I was moving in from Calueque up north, he managed to get choppers in and they evacuated their wounded and that guy died on the chopper. There was vehicles burning, Casspirs burning, there was bodies lying around, there was charred bodies that burnt into the vehicles, and there was a white...we call it a tiffie...a white mechanic missing. So I sent, because I've been driving in a Casspir, I sent one of my lieutenants and a corporal to go to the southern side, there's a pipe line on the southern side of the town going into the river. Quite long, about 400 metres...much longer, about 2 kilometres, and I said to them, go and drive on the pipe line and let the Bushmen sit on the front of the Buffel and watch for any spoor that's running south. The Bushmen is clever enough to distinguish between an enemy relaxed spoor and a spoor that's happened now. So just to see maybe he's fucked off to the south. And while they were driving there I could just hear the horrible sound of a landmine going off, and I knew it's them, they trapped the landmine. And I wasn't feeling very lekker that day as well, because the whole night I've been up and I never had sleep and it's just chaos all over me. So eventually they radioed me back and managed to get me back on a small radio, said where they trapped the mine, Duvenhage again...again it was Duvenhage broke something and he's not very well but no open wounds, everything's ok. I was feeling a little bit better but I had actually went there with my Casspir, driving through these trenches and through town, on my way to the south and eventually got to them, and as I got there, which they didn't tell me on the radio, is that the Buffel, the wheels were blown completely off. The chassis fell on to two more mines, they were actually sticking out, brand new green TM57 mines, they missed the detonators and they were two of them, were sticking out on the side of this vehicle. And I couldn't believe it, they were very lucky actually. And it was at that stage Mike that I felt that this is now getting too much for me and I was thinking about in Cape Town, the guys are now my age are surfing there at North Beach and Clifton and lying on the beach enjoying themselves, enjoying the life, going out to parties, and I thought to myself, what the hell am I doing in this? Why must I be in this? Not lekker. But it blew over quickly, I remember making a coke, a ratpack coke, at the back of the Casspir there's a tap sitting on the trappie, and bended down and just filled up my coke *laughs* and I drank my coke, and I thought to myself, come now aircraft, doesn't matter, now I've had enough, they can come now, I can't take it anymore. And ok, quickly blew over, went back into the contact area, the guys were already cleaning up, cleaned up, many of the bodies of 101 were taken and put on the Blesbok. A Blesbok is a Casspir logistical vehicle. And the burned out Casspir which I saw through the night was now still burning but smouldering, smoke and stuff. And I managed to see inside we had two charred bodies just outside the door and inside there's a guy sitting, badly charred. You could see his legs, you could see

	his teeth, everything is burned away, and I realised that there's no time to scrape this guy off, so we've got to take those Bulperde, hook them and go south. There's no more time and I was worried about the MiGs, they actually gave me a free ride there and never bothered me while I was busy there. So I decided to get out of this area and get as much as possible, get our vehicles as much as possible back and our bodies back and we go south.
Interviewer	How many bodies are you talking about here?
Dewald	Umm...
Interviewer	It doesn't have to be specific, just a general figure.
Dewald	I think I had the exact figure...
Interviewer	Do you think it would have been in the region of about 10, a dozen?
Dewald	About 10 or 11 I think it was....I can't remember how many.
Interviewer	We can check the figure later if you like, but I just wanted a rough idea of how many casualties they took. Now at this stage...
Dewald	I just need to say something about the...on our way down driving this...
	END OF SIDE A ( <i>counter at 536</i> )
	SIDE B ( <i>counter at 9</i> )
Dewald	On the our way to the south, the Bulperde now got hold of this Casspir with the charred body inside it still, and they were driving south, and that body unfortunately disintegrated. That's why when I saw it I knew that if I touch it now it's going to break up and we drove out with it and the whole body broke up in pieces and fell through the floor which was also messed up and disappeared. When we got to Ruacana there was no body! And they asked me for months after that, I had to give them explanation where this body went to, and I said, I can't give you an explanation. What actually also happened is that the guys towing this vehicle down, when they heard the landmine explosion of Duvenhage and them, they dropped this Casspir into the bush and turned around with the Sapper team and came back and I was very glad because nobody asked them to do it, it was just pure initiative. They came back, de-mined those...or cleared the area of mines and then hooked that Buffel on and went south to Calueque, dropped that Buffel in Calueque, came back and took that vehicle, the Casspir which had the body in, and then took that down. But they told me later on in the reports that when they hooked it up the second time the body was still there. But it was quite a rough ride down and then most probably just disintegrated.
Interviewer	Now in this whole process, you've got the missing tiffie, that was van der Mescht...

Dewald	Not van der Mescht, Papenfus.
Interviewer	And now you don't know what's happened to him, he's just disappeared.
Dewald	<p>At that stage we didn't know what happened to him. We gave up hope of finding him there. I remembered about what the chopper pilot told me, he saw vehicles rushing off to the north western side, and I knew that he actually...well we couldn't find the other Casspirs, so they took the one Casspir. I think it was one. Let me just check how many Casspirs it was. The others were shot out...two or three were shot out and one was captured and driven to the north west. The same Casspir that is standing at the Fort in Luanda now. So I actually added two and two together and I thought, ok maybe they took him. His body wasn't there, and he's white, and a lot of propaganda value, so they most probably took him. Which we later found out...but then we set off and started looking for him. So by so that we got orders again, after we'd been back at Calueque, to again deploy to the north. That's the time I told you that the Brigadier Swarhand Serfontein, sent the pilots with a chopper to Calueque, me and Snakes Snyman got on the chopper, we flew back to Ruacana, as we got there he came to fetch us with Commandant Lambrechts vehicle, we went to visit our troops which got hurt, Groot Duvenhage with his collarbone, Snakes Snyman whose ass got shot off, and a few other people that is in the sickbay. Went to visit them and then we went back to SAAF, had that hell of a nice braai at SAAF and ate meat and had that big party with the brigadier there. And then he called me one side, he said to me he wants to tell me something but not now here in front of people. So he called me one side, he actually congratulated me on a job well done. He said to me that we must go back tomorrow and tell the troops that we are staying a few more weeks, we don't know how many more weeks. And I knew that from the normal six weeks, to up normal eight weeks, now to a 13 weeks, and now extending it again, after we've had a lot of war and saw a lot of things happening, the troops won't be happy. Like I said, Bushmen are very close bonded families, they wanted to go home, and rest, and then come back again after that. I said to the Brigadier, there's no ways that I'm going to tell them that, would he mind to go with me? And congratulate them as well, not only me. congratulate them on a job well done, boost them a little bit and tell them that they must go back into the northern side. So he decided to fly back with me the next morning. So I flew out, him and the pilot and the gunner on the Allo. And in the aircraft he still asked me to write down a few notes for him, what he should tell the troops. And I actually can't remember what it was but it was all positive things towards them that I wanted him to tell them about it. And we landed on the dam wall and the troops were already paraded onto the dam wall, everybody. 701 Battalion had their guards right around the dam and so we were on the dam wall in a parade format and the brigadier addressed them there, and told them about how good we did, told them that he's very</p>

	<p>proud of us, and that actually boosted them quite a lot, so by so that nobody complained about staying. And after that little parade we had, I walked with the brigadier towards the 101 camp which was down at the bottom and the guys were bathing and playing around there, and we first of all passed the dam wall, we had a special chamber there where we put all the captured enemy equipment and stuff inside there and I showed him. And he still warned me not to eat the tinned food, he said it could be poisoned, he had experience in his past. And then we slowly walked towards the 101 camp, which was just south of the low water bridge, about 400 metres from the dam wall, and he stopped and he said to me looking in a western direction, says that the low water bridge here, how should we protect Ruacana with this? What do you think? And I said to him, Brigadier, thinking quickly on my feet, didn't actually know what answer he expected from me, I said to him, I will blow the island, the island is not a fixture, it's not a permanent thing, it can always be filled up with sand again. And he tapped me on the shoulder, very proud of me, he says to me, you know what Lambrechts wants to do? He wants to blow the whole bloody bridge – there are now pieces of iron, this iron construction – he wants to blow that away. Ok, it's not my place to say anything bad about Lambrechts, I had my feelings about him for a long time now and not supporting me and many things...anyway. So we went to the 101 camp, told them just there without anything else, he said to them, you guys didn't perform well, you should go and rest and retrain, I'm withdrawing you from the area. The troops were happy, the officers were humiliated...white officers, didn't see that at all as a compliment. They're excellent soldiers themselves. Now these young recruits are very happy they're going away. The Bushmen not so happy, because now they've got to go back into that shite again. So off we went...actually went to the western direction, just above the Cunene River, whereby it now forms an east west direction, just above that, in front of Hurricane base, at about 15 kms from Hurricane base northern side. And just our luck that night, Hurricane base 155s, howitzers, started shooting in a shooting plan there where we are. Almost killed us there.</p>
Interviewer	So nobody had told their gunners that you were there?
Dewald	<p>Nobody told the gunners that we're going to be there. We have no communication with them, there's no way that we can communicate with them. We tried various channels to warn them, to the ops room...ops room most probably have communications with the guns, and it took us a long time before they stopped fire. It's the first time I actually experienced something like that from own forces guns anyhow and realised that jesus this is bad news, if you fire at the enemy with these guns, it's a good thing from our side but...</p>
Interviewer	...but it's not such a good thing when your own guys are firing on you.



Dewald	Correct.
Interviewer	But you took no casualties?
Dewald	Luckily no casualties. We dug in quickly, there's thick sand. No vehicle damage as well. But very close firing to us. Then from there onwards we went up to Techipa again, to the Techipa area and started looking for shit. Playing cat and mouse again, shooting a lot of mortars. We used that mortars a lot.
Interviewer	This time with full charges in them so they could....
Dewald	Those were the 81 mortars.
Interviewer	Oh, that's right, we're back to 60s.
Dewald	No, we're back to the 81 mortars. 60s is Patmores. So took the charges off. They still didn't have charges. And anyhow we did a lot of firing, we actually utilised those guys to the maximum, look for shit, try to drag some fire out of them, see what type of guns they are using. A lot of vehicle movements, daily. You just picked up suddenly there's a lot of movement. And eventually we came, I can't remember how long it was then, another week, another 8 days or something we played around, and Charlie Company 201 Battalion flew in with Terence Phillipson as the company commander. Finally relieved us of our duties. So we went to the south, went into Ruacana, handed over the vehicles, handed over ammunition, information, maps, whatever we could hand over to them, and it was quite late and the aircraft was supposed to come in the next morning. That night I was lying in my bunker counting 12 mortar bombs falling on SWAVEC, that electrical hydraulic installation. I could count them, the first one woke me and then I counted two, three, four, as they were falling, and I knew that Lambrechts is going to phone me now, want me to go and pursue this operation. First of all I saw him riding over with his motorbike to the ops room, about three o'clock in the morning, and I waited next to the telephone, these hand telephones. Rang, picked it up, says, come to the ops room, I said, I'm there now commandant. Went to the ops room and he said to me that I must get a platoon ready to go out there tomorrow morning to follow up on the spoor on this attack on SWAVEC. I said, no sorry commandant, I said, do you realise we're flying back tomorrow? Do you realise what we have been through? There's no way I'm going to get a platoon there. I will go but my platoons won't go anymore. It's the second time you're keeping us back here. and he realised he's not going to get any joy from me to support him to get a platoon out there. The next morning early we actually were taken with vehicles to the Hurricane bases, got on the aircraft, on our way back to Omega.
Interviewer	With some very happy troops.
Dewald	Happy troops to go back. <i>break</i> Before we left, Three Two Battalion came in and were deployed at Hurricane base. The battalion sergeant major there, the RSM, was Sergeant Major

Tallies Taljaard. We had Piet Fourie, which was the Recce commander and Jan Hougaard which was their commanding officer and Herman...I forgot his surname...was the intelligence officer. They called me into the ops room at Ruacana and I had to sit with them for about a day and a half giving them all the information I had, to Herman the intelligence officer, on the Techipa area and surrounding areas. Also asked me the question that, do I think that they will attack from Xangongo to Calueque, or would they use Techipa and might exit through or try and exit through SWAVEC area, which is the other exit to the south. And I made the mistake by giving them my thoughts as I saw it because they were lifting mines on the Dongwena, Xangongo road that they will be coming from the south. Also bear it in mind that Menno Uys told me that at Humbe a whole lot of vehicles have formed into Humbe which is just slightly north of Xangongo. I thought that they won't waste time going a little bit back towards Cahama, then south to Techipa and then back into...they proved me wrong and they actually started their advance from the Techipa area. I left, and as I said, gave over to Lieutenant Phillipson. Phillipson was unfortunately deployed to the eastern side of the river into Echo Company old area, at Cuomato area, whereby they also experienced a lot of Cuban fire, were surrounded at a certain stage, managed to escape very skilfully, but did very well. I'm not too familiar with what exactly happened in that area. Also to the west, Three Two Battalion got deployed. They got the same problem as what 101 Battalion got, also very not as clever as I was, playing cat and mouse for experience of 13 weeks. Just went in, got hammered unexpectedly, lost, I think, three Unimogs, a lot of kit and 60 of their troops were just missing in action for three days until they reached by foot Calueque dam wall. But at that stage I was back at Omega and we were actually doing retraining on the stage we did in our previous deployment and replenished a lot of things, troops got new uniforms and weapons were shot in again and a lot of things done at the training base which was just slightly north of Omega. And then we got the order to fly into the eastern side into Cuito Cuanavale. We were driven with vehicles for some reason, I don't know why. We deployed from Rundu, we've got an airport at Omega, but we were driven down to Rundu. When we got to Rundu we again had the opportunity to replenish a lot of things. I managed to secure and, me and my sergeant major, which is Smiley Ericson, managed to get a lot of blue coils from the army stores just to better our communication on HF radios. There was actually a photograph put up there by this commanding officer called Mostert. He was a signaller and he had signals stores, he put a photo up there and said to the young guy from...a coloured corporal, that if he sees the same face as that photograph, he must phone him immediately because he wants to come and catch me there, he knows that I'm going to do. So immediately we found...I saw my photo on the door there and I asked the corporal what was this about? And he said to me, that the major said that if he ever sees me that he must report me. So he said,

	<p>he's just making a joke. And as I was talking to him I was taking him a little bit deeper into the store and my sergeant Smiley Ericson had a bag and he just collected from the shelves, and I just thought by myself, now I will show him how to not trust me. So we took a lot of things. I still even up to today have a lot of that here. Normally if you ask them, no, then there's nothing in store, but once you walk into their store there are thousands of these things, you have to use in battle. And we actually spoke to that corporal and promised him a job going in as my personal signaller into the combat zone and he was very proud of himself. But obviously we never got him to go with us. But not long after that day or what we were flying out into Mavinga. Got to Mavinga, night flying the whole company. UNITA was running around setting little tins alight on the side, and as the aircraft goes past that the wind blows and kills the little fire in the little tins. And then it's pitch dark. That aircraft turns around, faces the other way of the runway, turns his propellers to the front, so the wind all blows to the front, never switches off, opens the back door and then you get about five minutes to take the whole company, all your trowsers, everything, your ammunition, your rations and everything has to be taken off. Sometimes they don't allow you even to finish off completely then you see the door starts coming up. They're very edgy these guys, doors comes up and they just turn the propellers towards us again and then they take off. And in that process it's just dust and shit and wind. You can't see. Your rat pack boxes are blowing five hundred metres away from you and it's dark. And then you realise that there's guys walking here in between you. All with ex old army greatcoats. UNITA guys. We called them gif appletjies. Walking around and stealing our food. The Bushmen almost killed a few of them there, because they just walked around, and didn't worry about ammunition and stuff, just food. They were always taking food of ours. So then we recuperated. Finally our lift arrived. It was a few Ratels that came in. I can't remember the amount of Ratels but it was about ten Ratels. Came in to collect us. I drove in the command Ratel. On my way there it took us about three days to get into the Chaminga area. Drove past many ex battlefields, could see thousands and thousands of vehicles shot to pieces, bonnets lifted up. We managed to take a plough off one of the T55 tanks which is still working in a hundred percent condition. We saw many tanks just abandoned.</p>
Interviewer	All of these vehicles are Russian, Cuban or Angolan vehicles?
Dewald	All Russian, Cuban, Angolan. It's Orrels and the normal logistical vehicles. Urals and what's the other one called... with these wooden sides...but it's all Russian.
Interviewer	So these are all enemy vehicles.
Dewald	All enemy vehicles. No, I never saw anything else but enemy vehicles. We saw the occasional South African old generation vehicles running around with UNITA inside. I remember seeing an old water tanker of most probably the year 1978 running

around with an Omega sticker, the crow sticker [the unit's logo was Pied Crow] still at the back, a UNITA driver. So it's all given to them by the military intelligence at that stage. But we went through many of these battlefields. I couldn't believe what I saw. We saw many skulls. We saw many human bones. We picked up some of these parts and the guys put skulls on their vehicles like an insignia in the front. I specifically saw a tank with a piece of hair still inside against the front of the tank, from the inside, it had a reddish colour in it. I just don't know what happened to that, the tank seemed to be ok. Some of these tanks I thought, could be driven away by just putting some diesel in there. Abandoned. But it was a horrible sight. And I could clearly realise and see that there's been a hell of a battle here and somebody lost and it was not the South Africans. There's no proof of any South African vehicle even shot out there. Not even a Ratel, not even a tank, not even a Buffel, not even a Casspir. Not even a logistical vehicle I could see. So we went through that and into different areas, replenished water at the Chaminga source. Could clearly see battle going on in that area as well, or battle that went on just prior to our arrival. A lot of fire still in the area. went over the Shaminga highlands, very high hills. We lost communication and didn't understand exactly that the little stations that the signallers has put up whereby it converts your signal into another signal to BHF and stuff like that. We were not briefed by that time. So I got to the battalion headquarters... I don't know what it was called, I think it was Vergroep Hoefkwarteer or something. Met up with Anton Grundlingh. The commanding officer at that specific stage was Anton Grundlingh. The intelligence officer was Gert Vol. The battalion echelon commander was Sergeant Major Botha. He later became a sergeant major at Three One Battalion in South Africa. Those are the faces and the guys I can remember. But we had a briefing there, we had our signal conversions and signal charts, we got from there. And we carried on. Always interesting to go into one of those battalions because it's like a well organised town. You have streets made up, and you have signs like street signs saying, showers this side, tinned food this side, wet rations that side, barber this side. Things like that I saw there. Even recreation area that side, a little TV with a screen and stuff like that. So they were well organised. And then obviously the operational area underground. Lookout points that was there, that warned them of any incoming aircraft. They had the listening in positions, signallers, the most beautiful vehicles there, sitting like aircraft seats listening in on the enemy and most 90% of those guys were South African Spanish speaking guys. Very clever. All the codes, they break the codes themselves. They don't even hand it in. Because any operator makes a mistake at some time, and says, couldn't get Alpha Five. What's Alpha Five? He says, no, it's ammunition. So those little things they make notes of and eventually they manage to break 90% of the codes themselves these guys. Well that's how it looked inside this position. Tents. A lot of G5 cannons deployed. A lot of Aardvark anti aircraft guns deployed. A lot of cammo nets. And

then we went past eventually, replenished everything, got clean water – they had a lot of water there. Saw a lot of UNITA guys there as well. More senior type of guys, speak English at least. And then we were going into a north western direction over the Shambinga highlands into a position, and I met up with a company. If I'm not mistaken it was called the First Penetration Battalion of UNITA. Very well experienced guys, good fighters. Commanding officer Major Tony, and my interpreter was a Lieutenant Fenny. They actually dug me a very nice basha, for me and Smiley Ericson, my company sergeant major. The first day we were there we were hammered by D30 cannon. I might have to add that we took over from 7SAI, and that specific company was commanded by George Butler. He was also a captain at that time. It was a white battalion and they were deployed just outside the range of the D30 cannons. Not allowed to go inside the range. Did a lot of operations in the area. At that stage also in that area was 203 Battalion, which is the other Bushmen Battalion. Three Two Battalion armour, Ratel 90s. Can't remember, it was a white haired captain that was...and then we deployed and we started doing integrated patrols with UNITA. And there was a small gap in the minefield. We laid just on the eastern side of the minefield. There's a minefield of about 24 kilometres long set up by South African forces. Apparently that time it was one of the longest minefields after the Second World War ever in the world. Well done by Permanent Force members and then the civilian force regiment came in and did some funny tricks which is not in one book. Connected Claymore mines in the trees to anti personnel mines on the ground. You won't find that type of thing which is actually very good. They did about almost 10 kilometres I believe of that funny type of minefield. But it was a small gap which was marked on our side, which we couldn't go through the minefield, and many of our patrols we sent through those minefields. We've actually taken also a LATV [*a long range observation TV camera*] through that and deployed it onto a hill with artillery observers. That LATV could bring in a picture very, very, very sharply in close. It was told to me at that time it can take a number plate at 50 kilometres depending on the heat waves of the early morning, maybe late evening it could do it or something like that. But yes, that's what we deployed and we've again in that area, in our deployment, in our patrolling, we saw many, many tanks shot out. Again the same picture was at Tumpo. Big battlefields that the guys patrolled around. One of my guys that took over from me, one of the companies of Bez Bezuidenhout which took over from me there...I'm sorry, I took over from him, or 7SAI took over from him, Bez Bezuidenhout, and then I came in after I'd been to the west. So Bez Bezuidenhout, Alpha Company 201 Battalion was there, and they trapped a few foot mines. Luckily there was something wrong with their chargers and the one guy just lost a boot, almost no toes and one guy's foot got shot off. So it was not a very healthy area to walk in. Mined all over. And we never knew where – UNITA could tell us more or less where the enemy mines were.

	<p>We knew where ours was. Our minefields were marked on the trees on our side, clearly marked, you could establish it quickly where the minefield goes. One of my platoons got shot at with D30s, they pinned them down for almost a day by D30 fire. They managed to lie in the vehicle tracks, couldn't move, very accurate fire, they must have had enemy observation on them, or artillery observation on them and they were very accurate. No vehicle lost, no troop lost. So it wasn't very effective. We experienced the occasional B21 firing at us.</p>
Interviewer	<p>What about aircraft?</p>
Dewald	<p>Aircraft daily. But we were warned well in advance and could hide out. I know of the guys to the south, many aircraft hindered them. But normally there was a place, they followed a certain line through a certain valley and then they banked out to the left and we were deployed to the right. For some reason they kept on banging the open ground. It had no effect. They came over so low that they could see the pilot's helmets and they could sometimes read the helmet's and stuff. But they never seemed to be accurate, they always one side. But many aircraft coming in.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Did you see South African jets at that stage ever?</p>
Dewald	<p>Never saw South African jets. I experienced own fire G5 cannon fire from our side onto the bridge area. They didn't even want to use that at later stage because there was one battalion pinned down, I think it's the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade, it was lying between the minefield and the bridge on the eastern side of the river. They were very hungry, they couldn't feed them, and they were trying to sneak over the river, and one of my platoons told me that when they were at the artillery observation post that he directed fire towards a rubber dinghy coming over from the river, now most probably to bring some food to these guys on the other side, and he gave accurate airburst fire onto that dinghy. And it like just exploded, and all the guys perished, and he said also many of them swam out to the river on the western side and then the second, third and fourth salvoes of the artillery airburst killed them on the river banks and they were lying there for weeks. They could see them lying there, they were too shit scared to go and fetch them because they knew the observer had observation on that specific point. But that was told to me by a third party. And then after all these patrols we were doing I was summonsed into Anton Grundlingh back to the battle group HQ. And went there, took me another three days to get there through very bad terrain we had to go. Went there myself, my Ratel, with UNITA. There was a protection element that also came with me. And got there and received the orders from him that we have to tell UNITA we are now to leave. We received orders from South Africa to go. And that's what I have to tell him. All the way back I went and called them together. He had a bunker, you won't believe, it looks like the underground tunnel at Piccadilly. You had to shout and you echoed down there and then it showed me that he's got experience, and he's been fired at many times and</p>

	<p>he'd rather be safe than sorry. He had his whole ops room down there and his own bed there and everything. But a lot of overhead protection and stuff that he's got. So I eventually managed to get hold of him, called Lieutenant Fenny and said, let's talk. And I tried to be very subtle with this whole thing and tell him that it might be a temporary arrangement that we have to now leave him, and because I knew that if I tell him that the whole of the South African forces are getting withdrawn he will not let me go. So I said to him, I'm getting replenished but the guys are on its way, tried to calm him. He wasn't very happy at all. But it came so suddenly that I had to get my platoons back from the patrols. So it took me another day to get all of the guys back in base. Then we packed up, said goodbye to these guys and he still didn't want to let me go. He actually brought in a few guys with guns to block my way, and said that he first wants to find out from his superiors if I may leave, it's not a matter that I can leave, they want to find out. So they've got this funny winding, it looks like a bicycle pedals. They ding, ding, ding and they get power onto this radio, now the power's on the radio and then he talks on HF radio to his HQ. And eventually he cleared the road and said ok, we can go. So we went down, we went south...</p>
Interviewer	What month was this? That was in June of '88 that you withdrew?
Dewald	June 1988 we actually joined up there. It could be July '88 we started withdrawing. During the first week of August... <i>tape off</i>
Interviewer	After you'd had your discussion with UNITA you then got ready to withdraw.
Dewald	<p>Some of the UNITA soldiers cried and they felt that they had been betrayed by us. That evening we went south in convoy. When we were near Cuito at the source of the Chambinga river my Buffel hit a landmine and we called Commandant Grundlingh and said to him...and he asked me what's happening and he could hear it from HQ – at night-time sound travels very far. So he said to me what's happening? And I said to him, I'm feeling a little uncomfortable, it's getting dark now, so I'm going to sleep on the vehicles and tomorrow morning when the sun comes up we'll move out. And then we slept on the tracks – the Bushmen can't reverse a vehicle, they can't even drive forwards, how can they reverse? And I was scared about anti personnel mines and I didn't know what was happening. I was driving on a makeshift road. And then that morning I had a Sapper group with me and the Sappers came, climbed over the vehicles, into the tracks and got to my Buffel that hit the mine. Nobody got hurt fortunately. We had one old Kandando which had a cut on his eye, just above his eye, and that was all. So we all got off the vehicle, at the back of the vehicle, on to the tracks and we went to the next vehicle and we slept...it was a Kwe 100 with sleeping bags and all of that at the back, so we had a lekker bed to sleep on, so we slept there for the night. The next morning as the sun came up I actually got a fright, because as the sun came up I could just see shot out vehicles, BRDMs, PT76s, you name it, BTR60s, tanks, all around</p>

	<p>us. So it's another battlefield that got many, many people shot out and many, many vehicles shot out there. And then I realised this must have been some type of base or safe place, that's why there's a minefield round here. And eventually got the Sappers in, Sappers came up to the front, and they had all the equipment, so they cleared to the right of my Buffel that hit the mine, they cleared the whole path to the right, marked it with toilet paper and said, ah Captain we can go. So we ordered everybody on the vehicles and as we were driving about 5 metres to the right of our tyre it hit another landmine. Doof! Me and Smiley were sitting inside the cab in the front so there's nothing happening to us, but a few troops flew from the back of that vehicle and some of them landed in the hole of the previous mine, there was battery acid and stuff lying in there so they got quite nasty burns and stuff and were shouting at and screaming at us. Well eventually, I just wanted to grab hold of that Sapper and wanted to ring his neck because he didn't do their job properly. Anyhow we eventually managed to clear another route around it, and while we were clearing the route around it, Smiley Ericson took some cables, jacked the dif up to the right and hooked those cables onto the top and then the okes in front then lifted up the whole dif that disappeared now. So we were driving this Kwe on five wheels out of there. We actually drove it all the way down for more than 500 kilometres to inaudible on five wheels. He did a good job that guy, I remember him one day we had air locks. He took bullet points out of the mag belts and melted the lead out of them in a little bully beef tin and then poured it into the carburettor of this vehicle and sealed it off somehow, there's no more air locks. We drove with that vehicle, we could have driven to Cape Town. Fantastic.</p>
	END OF SIDE B <i>(counter at 547)</i>
	TAPE 4 SIDE A
Dewald	<p>As we reached this beautiful battle HQ, we went past a lot of these rations tents and it was a lot of jam stealers behind there. And we never got any sweets, tins, mixed fruit, and many of my Bushmen took, they loved that, and we came past a tent that was stacked from the bottom to the top with sweets. The guys kept for themselves at the rear echelons. So I just stopped a little bit further away and I said to the troops, you help yourselves. And we cleared that tent of tins of fruit and biltong that was sponsored by some civilian organisation. We never saw on the front, it was lying there at the rear echelons, they ate themselves to pieces. Anyhow we managed to get...</p>
Interviewer	And did anybody try and stop your guys?
Dewald	<p>Nobody tried to stop us. Nobody. Then we started going south and it became a hell of a race. Received our orders we formed the rear echelon, us and the Sierra...can't remember the call sign of the Three Two Battalion, a Ratel 90 grouping, eskadron.. And we as an infantry company protected by this armoured</p>



platoon...not a platoon, I think it was more or less a company, about 12 Ratels, started moving down south. So we gave the guys in the front time to go and we packed up everything. All the logistical vehicles got packed up, and it was one hell of a convoy going south. Can't imagine how many vehicles because some of them left days before we left, but we could see the tracks and we could see the dust for miles and miles in front of you, and we formed the back echelon to protect those guys. And as we were driving we managed to see many, many vehicles, abandoned South African vehicles. Abandoned, actually broke down and UNITA sitting around it like vultures waiting for us to disappear so they can claim it. But it was left there for a reason. There's a whole recovery program and team which knew about every location of these vehicles, so they could just pick them up, fix them, if they can't just hook them onto...I saw many vehicles going past us or in front of us hooked onto another vehicle or a Withings recovery or something. But we managed to take 99% of what we had there, we managed to take it south. Took a long time. Sadly that same day we got through the Mpupa River, where that engineers built a bridge over the Mpupa River, where the Mpupa falls are. Not Pupa, Mpupa. It's north. Pupa is south at the Kavango River, just across the Three Two Battalion Buffalo base. And then sadly three white troops drowned. They went for a swim in the river and never came back. I was there that specific time looking for them. Then we started up again south...I think it took us about a good three days to get to the south, three to four days. And then thought that we are going into Rundu South Western African area. They blocked us. We had MPs blocking us at the engineered bridge at Rundu. And we were told that we have to sleep in Calai. There was a few other units there as well already congregated. And we decided ok fine we'll sleep that side then, and we later learned that we had to sleep there, stayed over, because of the journalists and the Cuban delegation that needed to eyewitness that we are actually moving over into South West Africa territory. While we were there they distributed to us these shoe shine tubes, and we had a free...we could write whatever we wish on our vehicles. And the Bushmen wrote many things. Three Two Battalion guys wrote in Spanish so that those okes can also understand, wrote on the Ratels a few things about the 'garra' and it's like...it's war cries and stuff that we were...and the Cubans were not happy. They claim that we were about to leave...just have to tell you one more story before we left. At Mpupa there was a church, and I liberated the pulpit, there was nothing going on at that church, a beautiful pulpit, so I took it out. And I wanted to make my bar at my house in Omega. And there was a commandant that spotted...there at Mpupa he spotted this beautiful pulpit and he said that he wants it. And I actually promised him that he can have it. And actually he like forced me to politely have it or something like that. And as we were lying there I heard from my sources that we've got Three One Battalion trucks in Rundu. So I quickly got hold of one of the drivers of those trucks and I said, come around here, come over the bridge

	<p>into Culai, load that and send it back to base to be dropped off at my house. So this commandant came one day, he just came up there, asking where's his pulpit now, where's his bar counter? I said, but you already came to fetch it. He says, who came? Somebody came and said for you commandant and I gave it to them. And he was the moer in about this that I gave it to somebody else without a letter or something from him. But that's the only way I could salvage the bloody thing. But anyway then the day we had to leave over the bridge, then all the Cubans were there, we had ministers there and the press was there and everything, and we slowly...it started off quite early in the day and I think because we came in last we went out last and Three Two Battalion...last was us and just behind us the four Ratels from Three Two Battalion came over, and that was it. Then it was over.</p>
Interviewer	<p>So you were amongst the last troops to actually physically leave Angola.</p>
Dewald	<p>We were the last. We were the last batch. I can actually say, the six last vehicles through there. I also know that we were not really the last. There was at Mavinga or at Jumba, I'm not very sure where, I think it was at Mavinga, they tarred the runway, because when I drove down south I saw one or two vehicles with tar drums from (<i>inaudible</i>) with a few bulldozers and stuff loaded onto those low beds and you could clearly see it's from the engineer corps, heavy earth moving equipment, they went past us to the northern direction. And I actually thought to myself, I wonder what the hell are they going to do there? And I later learned that they just had a last job to do to finish the tar, to tar the runway.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But you were probably the last combat troops then. There might have been a protection element, I don't know but nevertheless.</p>
Dewald	<p>I think I can with authority say that we were the last that went out. Documented and observed by the Cubans.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And what did you write on the side of your vehicle?</p>
Dewald	<p>We had a saying, it's actually Smiley Ericson that wrote 'old soldiers never die' on the side and something in the front...was a huge picture in the Rapport on the front. I had it for years and I just lost it, I don't know where it is.</p>
Interviewer	<p>So now you're withdrawn, do they send you back to Omega?</p>
Dewald	<p>Send me back to Omega and then we started with Resolution 435, with the talks and everything.</p>
Interviewer	<p>At this stage have the high command come down and given you guys briefings so you can pass it on to your troops, as to what's happened in this war, why we're at this stage now that we're withdrawn from Angola? Did anybody sit down and explain to you the details?</p>

Dewald	We had many high profile visitors. Can't remember was it General Meiring? Geldenhuys.
Interviewer	General Geldenhuys was the Chief of the Defence Force at that stage.
Dewald	<p>All our senior officers were summonsed to Rundu and given a briefing. I can't remember if General Geldenhuys himself was there, but we were informed about Resolution 435, a little bit about the history of Namibia, and the voting that is going to take place. We were informed and actually I was recruited as the political commissar for the eastern area from Bagani up to just before Katima at the Kwando River. So in actual fact the whole of the Caprivi. That's including the Three Two Battalion area at Buffalo. And Bagani included and Andara included.</p> <p>Simultaneously when UNTAG started coming in we were informed about UNTAG yes, how we should address UNTAG, how we should respect UNTAG, and all that shite. And then the withdrawal started from the Cubans out of Angola and of our forces of our battalion rapidly starting to go. I remember the 24<sup>th</sup> of October the wives and kids were supposed to be out of Omega. I can still clearly remember the date. They had to go out of Namibia. So we ended up being five members in Omega, worked for the Department of Defence Administration. We were given money by the army and we were flown to Windhoek to go and buy nice clothes, so we bought khakis and things that's practical. We could grow our hair as long as we like and beards, and we're not part of the army, we work for the Department of Defence Administration. The reason why we actually stayed there, we appointed five guys, Commandant Callie Sanders. I can't remember what his portfolio was but he was the officer commanding. Myself, became the paymaster of the battalion. Maritz Taylor became the logistical guy to slowly demobilise logistics, weapons handing back, things like that. Sergeant Major Mostert, which was the RSM, was there as a camp commandant. We had 11 boreholes around Omega and he had to start them up every morning and service them, and he looked after the general hygiene in the camp, I mean, we had almost 5000 Bushmen there.</p>
Interviewer	Was that all soldiers? 5000 soldiers, where were the wives?
Dewald	Not soldiers, we were at a certain stage about 1000 soldiers, plus families then. About 4000, 5000 that stayed there.
Interviewer	Alright, when you spoke about the wives that had to leave Omega, that was the wives of the white officers and the white...?
Dewald	White officers.
Interviewer	And they went back to South Africa.
Dewald	Correct. Some of them were South West African wives...
Interviewer	Ok, but they went home to wherever home was.

Dewald

The last guy that was here was Bez Bezuidenhout, of the five. He was appointed for...quite frankly I can't remember, but I think it was the chief liaison officer between us, the ex battalion, and the UNTAG people. And the UNTAG started coming in, slowly started infiltrating in there, and we had a Finnish contingency with a major called Major Reikonen. They had two groups, they had a fighting company, and they had 8 observers, all Finnish...no not all Finnish, sorry. But the chief was Reikonen of the 8 observers. So we were five people and we were monitored by 8 UNTAG people. Stupid. We went in...many times I went because we had a census over that time as well, and I was the chief census officer, and I couldn't move my ass out of the base to go and count the Bushmen in the veld, they always had to go with us. So many times we just drove, these stupid vehicles, I don't know what they were called, the United Nations, not fit for that area at all. So we just kept on driving, and sometimes take me five days to get back to base and never see them again. And then they all come with questions and stuff that I got an ace up my sleeve and we're doing something with the DTA and that's why we don't drive with them. I said, you keep up, I can't wait for you, you have to keep up with us. But they did a few good things these UNTAG guys. They put a lot of clean water purification plants up at certain Bushmen settlements in the area. They were not too bad, but they loved the black women of course. And the Bushmen women don't sleep around. So suddenly we had an influx of black women coming from the eastern Caprivi into our area, because that's the name where they get the name from Gwavas. So the Gwavas came in and they became the wives of these guys. They had a little whorehouse next to their camp there and actually they had barbed wire, they took about ten (Kimbos? 151) and they had barbed wire right around and had a gate and a gate guard so you could never enter there. And not inside, just outside, the very first Kimbo on the side was this whores that stayed there. And we caught them out one day and I called Reikonen, he's a very conservative officer. I said to him, look what's going on here? We don't allow this in one of our places. And they physically chased these women out of the base. And then the alcohol smuggling started coming in from all over. They just smuggled through the Bushmen, they drank themselves to death over that time. But they had to hand all their kit out, I was the paymaster, went to Rundu many times. Once we had to go there was no aircraft and had to drive by road, got into the Reserve Bank, got more than 8 million rands worth of cash in a beer box next to me on the seat. I had my jacket, we didn't have a weapon, we were not allowed to have weapons. I had a dankie tannie messie with me to protect 8 million rand. You know I made so much plans with that 8 million *laughs* on my way back. I wanted to go straight through to Botswana and...just dreaming about this 8 million rand. But that happened regularly, we paid out twice weekly, Bushmen were demobilised, uniforms back, guns were back, weapons were handed in. if they're not back they don't get their money. So that's just to keep a little bit of control over them so that we can task

	<p>them easily if need it be. So they had to come back every second week to fetch their money.</p>
Interviewer	<p>But did your former soldiers, the guys you had fought with, did they say, what the hell is going on here? They'd just been through a war with you, now their weapons are gone, their uniforms are gone and an election is coming up?</p>
Dewald	<p>You know we actually...I had many lectures, I was like I said, appointed as a political commissar in the area. I had video material made up by the South African army, propaganda material. Little things that, I showed under the nose of UNTAG, they never knew that I'd gather them all in the church. the church could take about a thousand people. Got them in groups, Alpha Company's wives and kids, soldiers. I had little programs for them to come to the church, and I had these videos continuously playing to them. I remember the one it was about Castro, about his beard, they made up his face so cruel and then it's like a devil bouncing out of here, the thing zooms into his eyes and the devil pops out and it's all propaganda. And then we play something about the DTA, because we were there to support the DTA. It was told to us by many occasions, never officially, but this is what our mission is to get these guys to vote DTA. Dirk Mudge and Mishake Muyongo. So yes it was portrayed to them, they asked many questions, especially the older Bushmen that fought in the '74 war and which were moered by the MPLA and the FNLA when they were still Fletchers. So they felt betrayed. Bushmen Board which consisted of the older Bushmen had meetings with me many times. And I said to them, don't worry, once we've done this...Three Two Battalion already moved down to South Africa to Pomfret by that...in May of that year, and we had to stay because we were 201 Battalion, we were South West African Forces, we had to stay because we had to vote, they needed our vote, especially that area of Mishake Muyongo, he was a Capriviian. So well, we voted. Before we voted, I remember doing a lot of voter education to them. they're very...they don't want to put their hand into a dark box. There might be a snake inside there. So you had to...I invited all the headmen and all the older Bushmen came in, we got money from army to buy cattle in Botswana, and we had braais and parties and we had vehicles available, and we pulled them in and we trained them to vote and to show them this invisible ink on their fingers and when they...because the ink, they put their hand inside this box and it shines on them...to get them to put the hands into the box was a mission. I went all around the Caprivi. I showed them how to draw...because that time they were very strict on the ballot paper. They couldn't spoil it. They mustn't go over the line. So I had to teach them how to draw a line, they couldn't hold a pen or a pencil or nothing. So we started off by doing it in the sand with a stick, and show them how to draw from corner to corner and that corner to that corner. We showed them exactly who they must vote for. SWAPO is the devil and it must be Mishake Muyongo or Dirk Mudge from the DTA. And I actually did a lot of work for the DTA there to get</p>

	<p>them to vote, and I think we were quite successful in what we did, because I had a friend counting the ballot – his brother counted the ballot papers in Rundu of the area – and he said when it came to the ballot boxes of Omega, it was very easy. He had three SWAPO votes and he thinks that they most probably made a mistake. It was just DTA, they could just gooi it onto one pile. So almost everybody voted for Mishake Muyongo.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Which was the object of the exercise, these guys were nearly all illiterate and so you just taught them to make their X in that spot. But did any of them say, what's going to happen to us?</p>
Dewald	<p>They did. They were very worried. The problem was, that they became very dependent on the South African Army. Since the first year they were brought back into South West. The reason being that the clinics were there, the Savie was there, the army shops, it was a nature conservation area, still is today. They were not allowed to grow crops there. So they were dependent from the shop, dependent on the army's money and the medical and a lot of other things. Roof over their heads. And they were very worried, because they knew that when SWAPO takes over...there was many SWAPO guys...actually we had many incidents. I had to...me and Commandant Callie Sanders went in front of the voting tribunal in Katima Mulilo. They accused us of doing something wrong, and the reason being that SWAPO came with a rally into Omega. Big mistake, big mistake. They were moered with sjamboks and everything out of that area, and then we got accused that we sweep them up. We never had anything to do with that. But they picked us out and we had to go and explain to this tribunal what's happening there. We were not found guilty, but not guilty as well, they never made a verdict. But they asked us these questions, I remember coming back from Windhoek, late that night I had a knock on my door, and the Bushmen Board called me and said to me I must come talk to them. And they were all sitting around the fire there and Alpha Company had a Kimbo with a thing there and they were sitting around this fire and obviously discussing what they should do. They had four options: they could either stay in Omega; they can go to Bugani; they can go to Angola back to where they came from; or they can come to South Africa. Those were the four options they had. And they wanted to know from me, they wanted to know, will they get houses this side? How will we handle them? Will they still stay troops? They're not literate, will they be able to get another rank? Will the families go with them? Is there work and jobs for the families and schools, clinics? A lot of things they asked me that evening. Intelligent questions. And I could answer 90% of them actually. Well I kept on saying to them it's their decision what they have to do. This is what the army promised and I'm sure that the army will do this, it will fly them out of here, the whole family, they will resettle them and it will be about two to three years – I actually thought I took a wild guess, and I said to myself, the army will never take three years to give them any housing, it will be most probably a year. But I said to</p>

	<p>them three years so that they will be happy when it happens. Well they ended up almost 20 years staying in tents. Just the worst thing that could ever happen to a human being. But that next morning the administrator of Namibia came, on the airport, we're standing there, we had the whole of Omega, everybody, lock stock and barrel, children, everything on that tarmac there, and we had a loudspeaker and we said to them, right, all the guys that wants to go back to Angola there you are, that's your spot there, and we had a sergeant waving at them, so a few went there. Bugani – quite a lot went to Bugani. Stay at Omega – quite a lot stayed there. But 75% decided that they want to go back to South Africa. And that guy, Pienaar I think it was...</p>
Interviewer	Danie Pienaar.
Dewald	<p>He came back to me that day and he said to me that he heard that I had a meeting with them last night and I convinced them to go to South Africa, and he's not very happy on what I did. So I said to him, bullshit I didn't do that. I answered their questions to the best of my ability, I gave them the picture how it looks in South Africa, they've never been to South Africa. They asked me is it cold, is it hot? Gave them...all their questions, I sat there till early morning hours talking to these poor guys. And I said, it's not my fault that they are going there. The army anyhow made the promise to them in 1974. If anything happens they will be taken away. There nothing will happen to them like it happened in the Fletcher days. So yes, then the packing started. We had Biddulphs, Retief, Stuttafords, all of those guys coming in with trucks, trucks, contracted by the army, all standing outside there. And then it was a touch and go situation, are we still going to leave? What's the parliament deciding? This thing went up to parliament level. And they ended up paying thousands of rands to these moving companies for standing fees because nothing could happen there, the decision wasn't made from parliament. I remember we as the five that remained behind, all were sitting and waiting for an aircraft at the airport as well, and it never arrived. Phoned said, oh it went off but it came back. So it was a decision in parliament. I actually have a memorandum from parliament that I managed to get somewhere...I have to look for it, I saw it the other day, so I still have it...whereby they're making the decision on Three Two Battalion and Three One Battalion. And number 99 that aircraft came eventually, and we only got one telephone line, always had only one telephone line in Omega, and they managed to get the message through to us that they can start packing. So Stuttafords and those boys started packing. You know, they packed about 20 to 30 households, Bushmen, into one truck. They have nothing, a blanket and maybe a mattress and a bow and arrow and a little tree that he wants to plant on that side. Got nothing else. Nothing. A few pieces of clothing. So they managed to pack all of this, and all of this, and these trucks started going south. And me and Bezuidenhout and there was a doctor Don Roux, a lieutenant, he also helped with the administration, so we did a administration</p>

	<p>and started packing these Bushmen into C160s and C130s, flying down to Grootfontein. From Grootfontein onto a Boeing 707, and then flying to Kimberley, taken from Kimberley into Smitsdrif. I can't remember how many flights it was. And then right at the end on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March there was the last flight that did the round from Catima picking up the Department of Defence Administration guys. Went to Rundu picked us up, went to Grootfontein, had a hell of a party in Grootfontein. The guys from Ondangwa and Oshakati also went down to Grootfontein so we met up with our mates there and we had a hell of a party. Last party ever. Got heavily intoxicated into the aircraft, slept our way back down to the RSA and yes, got off at Kimberley...actually dropped us at different bases. It was a long flight. Even smoked on the flight it was so long. And then dropped me in Kimberley where I then became the second in command. I actually flew down many times to Kimberley to assist them in setting out the base. The Bushmen like fire so you put the tents in a square with a fireplace in the middle so the families can sit around the fire at night and stuff like that. And we actually had the unfortunate incidents whereby some of the guys flew down and didn't know that their families were not flying down from the Tsumkwe area and when they got to South Africa realised but their family is still on the other side. We had many of those cases. We had an old man walking that we caught on the road and said where are you going? He explained to me that he's going back to Omega. I said, why, and does he know how far it is? He says, no it's not far it's about two hours because he flew for two hours – never flown in his life before, and his perception of ground speed whatever, is not the same as ours, and he thought it's about two hours walk and I'll be back at my place. It was sad. I remember them coming up to me the first time they ever see fog. Never seen fog in their life. Fog comes over it's cold, they never experienced coldness like that. And one Bushman one morning I had a meeting with them and they said to me, hey die stof is koud. Meaning the dust is cold here. And there's fog.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Didn't realise it was water, thought it was dust. How long did you stay at Smitsdrif or how long did you stay at Bushmen Battalion?</p>
Dewald	<p>We flew in the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 1989. I stayed with them till 1992. Then I moved into Kimberley itself to Group 22 to become the SO1 Force support as a major. We had about 21 Commando units falling under the group, ranging from de Aar up to a massive area. And in 1995 I went to Group 30, was promoted to a commandant, went to Group 30 in Potchefstroom, also with I think about 23 Commando units under our command. And later were sent as SO1 Force protection at the command HQ at the ops room at the HQ there. And in 1998 August I left the army.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And now some of the Bushmen guys have been moved to Smithsdrift to just north of Kimberley. I don't know what's happened to some of the other guys. Those are guys who fought alongside, what do you think of their fate, their situation now?</p>



Dewald	<p>I think it sucks. They've been abandoned by the army. Never negotiated them as well. We tried our best to get them jobs in the area as potato pickers, even cotton pickers. They were well in demand. Later bought them a raft to go over the Vaal River in the morning, they'd just pull themselves over there with a rope, and they worked close by. The Bushmen Board made the decision that the Bushmen would never go off Smitsdrif and go and stay on another farm and work there. They will be collected in the morning as labourers and will be brought before the sun is down back there. They never allowed them to go out. I see lately they've changed their attitude slightly and you find them staying in farms in Natal chasing poachers and stuff like that. But I think the situation sucks, the situation sucked even up to today. They got this fifteen thousand rand housing allowance and they pooled it and they bought that farm called Platfontein just close to Barkley West and they put up houses there, the houses is in a terrible state. I don't know who was the developer there but they're falling apart. There was supposed to be a clinic, there was supposed to be a shop, there was supposed to be tar roads, there was supposed to be running water, there was supposed to be toilets, everything. You can go today and see what of that is working? They don't even have a soccer field. They have to scrape their Karoo bossies away to play soccer. On the farm there's a very interesting archaeological site of old Bushmen drawings and stuff.</p>
Interviewer	<p>It's up on that little koppie.</p>
Dewald	<p>Little koppie there. And you can walk and...but I thought it's going to create some jobs for them and some income for them, but I think there's two Bushmen working in a little shop there, all their little bows and arrows and stuff they make they sell there. They're not marketing it enough. These guys hasn't got even a car to go and market it. The attention they get from the Northern Cape province legislator is bad news, so I feel very sad. I actually went there twice and I got so many questions from them that I'd rather not go there again. It makes me heart-sore and they still think that I made the promise in three years time they'll get a house, and decent housing and stuff like that. And I dropped them. When I went to Potchefstroom they thought that I'd abandoned them. Anyhow...it's sad the way they just let them go there. There's no job creation for them, nothing. There's one colonel now, Colonel Gert Schoombie, he's got a security company, and I actually introduced all my best Bushmen to him, so that they can also introduce their best friends and family to him. And he's busy with this Plaaswag story whereby these guys go as reaction forces and stays on farms, to protect these guys on farms. Work on the farm. That's where they belong. So there is a little bit of light at the end of the tunnel but the majority of them are still just lying around there, not being looked at. The kids are starting to talk English now, they always used to speak Afrikaans. Becoming rebelling teenagers, moving out, trying to get jobs somewhere else. Sad that the whole community is falling apart. In the olden</p>

	<p>days when I was still at Omega, we had the old Kandandos teaching the young guys on the art of bows and arrows and tracking and they had veld schools whereby they teach these guys. It just went for a ball of shit. They had these churches there called the Soutkerk, they play these drums, it's beautiful, every night they dance around the fires. But I see that it's also fading out. There's one that's quite active, the other ones has just died. There were five of them. Losing everything they had. It's bad.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And you yourself, you served as a soldier for a long time in your life, you saw a lot of conflict...the war itself, has it left any impact on you? Do you regret any of it? Do you think that it was a waste of time?</p>
Dewald	<p>I don't feel like many of my friends. I don't think it was a waste of time. I think it contributed towards the fall of Communism and it definitely contributed towards a safer southern Africa. The Cubans...although later on you learn that there was financial problems and stuff, why the Cubans actually wanted to leave, try to save face by going to Cuito and stuff like that. But I don't feel it was a waste of time. I think it was a generation that grew up that went through National Service and stuff like that, learnt a little bit of themselves in conflict and came out much better persons than the ones I'm seeing running around now. So no, I never feel it...actually the army taught me many dimensions which I can carry with me forever. Good dimensions.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Is there anything that we've discussed over the last many hours that you want to add?</p>
Dewald	<p>I think I can conclude by saying it's very sad that the Cubans and the new South African government is having a party given to the successes the Cubans had at Cuito Cuanavale. It is utter bullshit. I've been there, I saw what happened, I saw the bodies, I saw the vehicles, it's bull dust. How the South African government can believe not these facts I can't understand. How the Cuban government can claim victory at the Tumpo and at Cuito Cuanavale I just don't understand either. So it's sad that our later government and our Defence Force is supporting this type of junk whereby we knew what happened and we don't get the credit for that. Lastly I would like to say that both sides fought in the war. There's a wall going up here and for many years it's going to stand there. It's got the names of all the MK cadres that has died in conflict. They refuse to put up the old South African guys that died in the war. I feel it's the worst thing that could ever happen for reconciliation in this country. They should reconsider. That's it.</p>
	<p>END OF INTERVIEW (counter at 492)</p>

**Collection Number: A3079**

**Collection Name: "Missing Voices" Oral History Project, 2004-2012**

***PUBLISHER:***

*Publisher:* Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

*Location:* Johannesburg

©2016

***LEGAL NOTICES:***

**Copyright Notice:** All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

**Disclaimer and Terms of Use:** Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of a collection, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.