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TRANSCRIPTION FAX SHEET

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IDENTIFICATION: Tape 02
CONTACT PERSON: Michele Pickover
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Please note:

1. When typist is unsure of names, speakers will be identified by title.
2. Transcriptions are typed verbatim, and typist, when unsure of jargon, industry terms or individual's names, will type phonetic spelling followed by (unsure)
3. Please note many place names and surnames could not be found or googled, we would appreciate feedback, as these names would probably be mentioned again.

PLEASE NOTE INTERVIEW ENDS ABRUPTLY ...

TO BE CONTINUED TAPE 0/5 COL JAN BREYTENBACH

INTERVIEWER: It is 02.10.2005, and I'm in Sedgefield, and I'm interviewing Colonel Breytenbach and WILLY Ward. If maybe we can start with just a little biographical information, tell me a little about where you were born and where you come from.

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Okay, I'm Jan Breytenbach, so you would know who's now talking ... anyway I was born in Bonnievale in 1932 ...into a farming family, went to school there, then moved around a bit, my dad bought a farm and I was there, spent some time there, and then we went to Wellington where I finished off my schooling in Wellington Boys High. From there I jointed the Army ... it was called then The Military Gymnasium, and now they call it the Army Gymnasium, it was the Military Gymnasium, and I did a year's training there ... because I wanted to joint the permanent force, and I wanted to apply for an officer's course. Again I applied for the officer's course and I did that with the ... it now the Military College, but it was called the Army College ... it was actually an academy for cadet officers and I was a cadet officer in two years for commission into tanks, second lieutenant, and did my thing for almost two years and then, it was the time of Mr Erasmus, who was the Minister of Defence under DF Malan, and he had some weird ideas about how Defence should be run, so I decided I'm ... don't mix politics into the Defence Force, I didn't like that. So I resigned and I went overseas to join the Royal Navy and I was accepted by them, as an officer in the Royal Navy. I was an acting sub lieutenant and I did my navigator's course, and then I joined the Fighters squadron, and flew with them for a few years, working off aircraft carriers in the Far East, the Middle East and the Mediterranean, and when South Africa had to leave the Commonwealth, or actually they walked out of the Commonwealth, 1961, I was suddenly no longer eligible to serve the Navy, because I was now foreign ...Canadians, South Africans and Australians, we could serve the with the British forces, so I had to leave and I came back to South Africa then I joined the paratroopers, and I became a lieutenant, they called me a "veldkornet", so I didn't know what (inaudible – soft recording) ...I was

then a full lieutenant, I had left the Royal Navy as a lieutenant, in other words full rank of captain.

INTERVIEWER: And were they happy to take you back?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Yes ... well, they were always happy to get people into the Defence Force because of ... not many people joined, I'm talking of the Permanent Force now. So I became a paratrooper ... in the Infantry obviously, so I was in the Infantry, the paratroopers for ... 1961 until 1969 ... I went to, I was then posted to South West Africa then, as a SO2 ... by that time I was a major ... SO2 training, and I stayed there for a year, but during that time I was sent off to Biafra, with the other paratroopers, and trying to train guerrillas for the Biafran's and the Biafran Organisation of Freedom Fighters they called them, (inaudible) .. came towards the end of the war and the whole thing collapsed and we had to leave, had to get out there very quickly ... we were actually the last aeroplane to leave the airport, so we ended up along the shooting range ... I ended up back I Gabon and then we came back and ... but the Biafran situation ... it was drummed into me that we needed an SAS type organisation ... in fact I was talking, I already had submitted a paper to General Willem Louw, while he was still OC of (inaudible name) Commonwealth, trying to get in to change the paratroopers for the SAS type unit, because we could never (inaudible) paratroopers, and because we would have been more effective. Anyway this didn't happen that time, but while I was still in the paratroopers, 1967, I was sent off to the SAS selection course by (inaudible) ... (inaudible words) by C-squadron...32 SAS which I passed, and some of the other guys also passed. So we were ready to start a SAS-type organisation which we called 1 Brig Recon Commando and WILLY came in at that time as well, he was then in the CF ... he can play his own story ... but we came in on the CF side, part of the (inaudible) 1 Brig Recon Commando, after selection. They all did big operations in Angola and Zambia, some in Mozambique at that time, so I was transferred from, 1975, I was transferred from OC of what we called (inaudible name) back to Army Headquarters for about a year ... I didn't

like very much, but then the war in Angola came to the fore and I was then posted to Windhoek, to assist the FNLA, and get them off the ground, because we were going to support them ... and UNITA, I did know about UNITA but I knew about FNLA and so I trained with FNLA battalion and went to war operation ... we went to war in Operation Savannah ... and after Savannah we came back, I brought these chaps back because there was something over this and all that, and I started ... well they then know it as Bravo Group eventually because it was a battalion ... against the wishes of my superiors I may add ... then I stayed with them, 32 Battalion while we were then operating in Angola, as counter guerrillas as it were, mostly ... I stayed with them until 1977, when I went on a staff course ... so I did that, afterwards I was posted to fill the (inaudible word) command of SSO operations .. I was a Colonel by that time ... I stayed there for a while then I was given a job to attack Cassinga with the paratroopers so I went back with the paratrooping side and after Cassinga I became .. I was posted to 44 Parachute Brigade to start it, became after a bit of hum-ing and hah-ing I became OC of 44 Parachute Brigade. I stayed with them for a while until ... 1982 I think it was ... then I was posted to Military and Intelligence Special Tasks ... in due course I started with the school in Caprivi, Western Caprivi ... became the leader element for UNITA ...and (inaudible) I can't quite remember the names now ... amongst others also which I didn't at the time also formed Inkatha ... (chuckles) ... I think it was Inkatha but anyway ... also he was a bit of a problem, that one ... I left the army in 1987, I went to retire. So subsequently I've been writing books, I served for a short period of time with the Ciskei army, get their paratroopers . run (inaudible words) I fell out with Oupa Xhosa and I was chased away by him ... and I've been writing books and involve myself in conservation matters and I'm doing security, file security ... and a special time, I'm working for Safer Week as Chief Nature Conservation Officer ... and that's my story.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Can we go back to Operation Savannah for a minute? Tell me about your first meeting with the FNLA, what were your impression of these people?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: ... Real rubbish ... (laughs) ... absolute rubbish ... it was in Lepupa(?), place called Lepupa, we flew in there, that's where I met them the first time, and they were, ah they were ... actually I also felt sorry for them, because they hadn't eaten for weeks, probably eaten for weeks, they were just about starving, and had sores on their legs and so on, they were ... I think eight rifles amongst the lot of them, Tsenda's the cheapies ... ja they were called Tsenda's, Tsenda was the FNLA Commander himself of Angola, Moxico province and the Kavango ... so, I think they were robbing banks mostly, to stay alive, this was after the Portuguese forces were kicked out, that was before Independence, in 1975, in November, and they had all these various so-called liberation movements fighting each other, as you know the NPLA was supported by Cubans and the Russians, we supported the FNLA and UNITA. So what I got there was a bunch of rubbish, which I had to build up into a ... battle willing camp, and that is where the recces came in you see, I got some recces to do it. Now WILLY joined later, while Savannah was still a bit ... while we came back from the North, because Savannah is still ongoing really, but we deployed back into Angola after we came back from the North after ... you know we were receded, we were sent back ... no we weren't sent back, I was told to leave FNLA in the area of Sela(?), in the end of 1975 ... we refused, because we were fighting with them, we had tremendous report between us and them, we couldn't just leave them there, so we came back with them, we actually went on strike ...sit-down strike (laughs) ... we refused to come back, and eventually Magnus Malan sent an order that we will come back, and we refused that order you see, we'll come back with our troops or not at all, so we came back with the troops. Now I had them on my hands and I was going to do something with them, and that's when we starting training them as counter-guerrillas.

INTERVIEWER: This was now after Operation Savannah?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Operation Savannah was still going on, you see. We were the first half of Operation Savannah and there were still some troops deployed to the

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north, and then we went in again, back to Angola, but more the Huambo area and the Cunene province that's where WILLY came in, and I got ... he's also a recce ... and I got the next batch of recces to come and help, to come and train these guys to become counter-guerrilla operators. He became a company commander in the Battalion.

INTERVIEWER: WILLY do you want to tell us a little about how you ended up in this ...

WILLY WARD: Mess ...

INTERVIEWER: ...how you ended up in this mess and then maybe we can go back and talk a little bit more about the FNLA things ...

WILLY WARD: Also from the start, you want my history? I was born in the Free State, and went to school in Bloemfontein, and after school I was ... I went to become a pilot, but on the 19th of December 1963 I fell off a cliff, and ... my hand was crushed, and I lost the tip of my finger, I had already been accepted into Air Force Gymnasium, and I had to report to the Air Force Gymnasium on the 2nd of January 1964, but I had this accident then. I went back to them and they said, no fine I can still come to the Air Force, but I will not be able to be a pilot, because a pilot has to have 100% of all his faculties, right ... but I can become a navigator or I can become an engineer, or that type ... so obviously being young, the pilot had this grandeur for me, so I decided no, if I can't fly in their bloody planes I'll jump out them ... then I changed then. They couldn't take me then anyway because it was too close to, I was still recuperating, and I could only go in on the April intake, but I asked to be changed to Infantry ... which happened, and I was into, I ran like infantry in SSV in Bloemfontein, and I did my training there, and I did my six months paratrooper training and I became a paratrooper ...

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a bit about the paratrooper training? What year was this now?

WILLY WARD: This was 1964. At that stage, when I did that training, I thought this was the worst ... ordeal I had ever gone through, later in my life I ran across a worse ordeal ... (laughs), but I will get to that ... it was tough, but I could see the reason for it, and I could

see the reason for recce selection, the same thing, so obviously the paratroopers they wanted the cream of the cream, and they ... so you had to be tough physically also had to be tough on your mind ... a bit nuts too I suppose ... anyway it was great, and ... the training, it was a three-week training cycle then, and you had to pass the tests, there were ten tests, of them you had to pass seven, I passed all ten of them, so ... I think most of the guys on our course passed all ten of them, because we were just a great bunch of guys you know ... we wanted to be paratroopers. Anyway, to jump out of an aircraft, I think is the second nicest thing in the world, after train riding ... (laughs) ... and well, I continued parachuting for 25 years and then, I'm going Father's Day next Sunday, I'm going ...

INTERVIEWER: You're going parachuting.

WILLY WARD: ... Ja, I'm going parachuting. Anyway, I finished the parachute training, and I was citizen force, I was not permanent force, and I got posted to 2 Parachute Battalion, which was one of the citizen force regiments of, battalions of, then it was just 1 and 2, there was nothing else at that stage, there was really ... anyway they started doing camps and started working, I was a corporal, lance-corporal at that stage, and worked myself up, and went to Infantry School, did the course, became a sergeant, became a staff sergeant, then during this period I was approached and asked by friends of mine, also paratroopers, Monty Drake and Ritchie Wentworth and Keith Usee (unsure names) do we want to join a group The Hunter Group, so I said, what's this ... first I was anti it, immediately I said no, I'm a paratrooper. Come and have a look at this, they said. Anyway so we went one Saturday, and we stayed with The Hunter Group for three years, where we did anti-guerrilla training and ... similar training to what the recces did later on, and we were just, we'd seen a gap ... when we go on camps and things like that, we had done a few escape-and-invasions which were closer, which you guys learnt from SAS, but you know when you go down and do ... and come to Infantry School it's all very military and army and ...we were more specialised, and we wanted to ... and of course

SAS type training you see. Anyway, now this group, this Hunter Group went and did a selection course with Col Breytenbach down in Oudtshoorn, and we were the fore-runners of the First Citizen Force unit to become recces and we became 2 Recce, brother of 1 Recce, we were a citizen force group, which was ... at a later stage was great because a lot of the youngsters would go and do a two/three year stint, and a lot of money has been spent on them to go and this, now what do you do with them then? So now there was a battalion, the other was a unit, where they could be posted to, so your permanent force guys could be posted to 2 Recce ...

INTERVIEWER: Where was 2 Recce?

WILLY WARD: We were in Johannesburg ... ja we were stationed in Doornkop, and the Colonel actually came down, he was given instructions to come and see what this bunch of bloody civvies were doing over there, and he arrived there, he was busy up near Madingo ... Babelingwe there, and they arrived there, they had vehicles with them and everything like that, and that evening we went to the Shallow, and they parked their car outside and put their rifles behind the bar, so that they are out of the way so nobody could have access, and so some serious drinking ... a MP walked in there, the Military Police, and he wanted to know who ... he's off duty this MP, but he just hated us, old Sarel Hattingh, he just didn't like us so now I said, no – he's a major then – I said Major Breytenbach said we ... he said, Well that's not allowed ... anyway he ended up having his brand-new safari suit dunked in water and we

INTERVIEWER: Good ...

WILLY WARD: ... and ... the MP's didn't like us that much ... and when we became 2 Recce out very first stint we were called out to ... Op Savannah, and we went into Op Savannah, we went in, in the end of November '75, the first time, but it was like they didn't know what to do with us, so they sent us on patrol out ... you were there ... they just didn't know what to do with us, but we did do our first operation jump, and it was the first operational jump by a citizen force unit ever in the South African Army, and one of the

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very first operational jumps by any military, and it was a night jump on top of it ... and we were give instructions to get kitted up and we'd gone up there and we hadn't taken any parachute or parachute helmets or things, so we didn't have any helmets ... so the only helmets I could scrounge were Cuban helmets that they had found in Op Savannah in one of the things and we had these Cuban helmets ... just a strap around here and this Russian type helmet you had on the top, and we didn't have folding paratrooper rifles, we just had rifles with battle light stocks ... anyway, one of the guys hadn't done a parachute course, Neville Clay ...he hadn't done a military parachute course yet, so I quickly took him down the hanger and gave him a course, so his very first military jump was an operational jump ... (laughs) ...

INTERVIEWER: Five minute parachute ...

WILLY WARD: ... quick parachute course ... he was a civilian skydiver, so he had jumped before Anyway we jumped out, I mean I didn't mind going out with that plane, they fly north with the aircraft, then they turn it and they come down, so the enemy radar doesn't pick you up, and everybody look so bloody sombre in their aircraft you know, we're just going to die, here they've got a dominee and these okes standing here, you know this your last ride soon, you're not going to come back ... (laughs) ... and anyway, Africa is very black at night, that I can tell you, there's very few lights, except when there's a fire. As we left the aircraft, my helmet just shot back – kwack! - hit me on the back and set on the back and it was no use anyway, I've still got it, it is in my private ... in Sedgefield, and anyway, hit the deck and that's it, we just had to confirm the presence of enemy in the base there, for an attack that went in later on ... And we spent Christmas there and we spent New Year then and they decided no, go back. We hardly god back, I mean we were at the reunion, we had a party, we're back now, all the wives and all the kids and we had this party, so ... old Sabie van der Spuy was our ops commander, called us all one side, we were just being tasked again, we are going back.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about that?

WILLY WARD: Great, I mean we didn't, you know ... the women were up in arms and they didn't like it, the men going again ... anyway so ... and we all went back up again and then we joined the Colonel and we were split into two groups, the one group went to a place called Savate, and I was posted to Novo Demata (inaudible name) which was the unit where the Portuguese had their naval base, on the Quito river, and with the instructions to go and train the troops there, I headed the 450 troops ... anyway long story ...

INTERVIEWER: Four hundred and fifty ... were they Angolan?

WILLY WARD: FNLA. Anyway, a lot of them had been with the Colonel already, so they had a bit of training ...

INTERVIEWER: Took off the rough edges for you?

WILLY WARD: (laughs) ... Ja there were a lot of stragglers that came in also, with this lot ... Ag anyway, and then I was involved in that Operation Savannah, we were there for five months, and I can just say that when we left, you know, to tell you all the stories, there's lots of stories in that whole set-up, but maybe you should get yourself one of the Colonels books and read the stories, they are all there ... when we left, our troops openly cried, and I had a big lump in my throat also that day ...

INTERVIEWER: When was this?

WILLY WARD: It was June ... May/June 1976. And during this period Colonel said to me, Listen, you're wasting your time, you like soldiering, go back and become a soldier, come join me again.

INTERVIEWER: Because you were still citizen force at that stage?

WILLY WARD: Ja I was still citizen force, and I had the rank of Sergeant Major, a WO2, go back and say, I did, I went back and jointed Permanent Force, but then General Loots called me one side .. in the meantime Colonel had gone and that was the nucleus that started 32 Battalion, Bravo Group, then was ... Colonel Loots said to me, You're going to 32 Battalion, you're not going to the recces, so I said, but I thought I would become a

recce ... ah in hindsight, I suppose .. I think for my career it was a better move at that stage, because the Colonel said I can come up as a Captain, he'll arrange that I become a Captain, but the recces demoted me to a staff sergeant ... (laughs) ... but my pay was more than a Captain's, because of all the perks in the reconnaissance commando ... okay so I got all these perks, and he said you are going to get more money anyway ... and you prove yourself, he says, a year or two down the line, I'll see that you are doing well, so of course I'll be there. So I went to 1 Recce and I started with 1 Recce, and you know, now you join 1 Recce and you get put on a course with, I mean the same, they had just done a selection, it was Dawie Fourie and Don Cummings and Sam Fourie and .. all these guys, Kelder, Gert Kelder, so we were all on course together and it was actually a very bad course, because they were all quite senior guys already, I was even more senior than they ... but then after they had done the selection then you go to minor buds and you demolitions and you do mendicants(?) and then you do this, and then you go to minor tactics, so we all did this together, so that was great fun with these guys ... and I think in a lot of these cases, like with the survival course, Dewald actually used me as an assistant instructor, because he knew I have known a bit more than those guys. Anyway, so I became a ... I ended up in Reconnaissance Commando and I stayed in Reconnaissance Commando until 1981, when again in hindsight okay, I was offered a position with the Durban Corporation Security, they had just started a new security set-up and ... they dangled a carrot in front of me, and the money was very good and ...

INTERVIEWER: This is now a private ...?

WILLY WARD: This is private, this is Durban municipality, so ... I went across, and I just got ... I tell you what, I was so disillusioned because here I was fighting a guerrilla warfare, anti-terrorist war at that stage, and one of my things was, I had to see to protection for the electric pylons and the substations and the electricity department and the buses and the things, and every time I had a meeting, then these guys would sit around, they would have meeting to arrange when they're going to have a meeting, I've never been to so

many meetings in my bloody life, and that's ... what terrorists treat is there? Meantime they are having their buses burnt and their places burnt and then these guys sat, they just weren't with it you know, and I couldn't ... I really battled to work with these guys, but I hadn't left the Defence Force, I stayed on, I joined 44 Pallet(?) Brigade, I became company commander of D Company in Durban, and so again, I fell under the Colonel you see ... we always seem to just generate towards each other ... just I'll never fly in the same plane as him, you never know, maybe ... (laughs) ...the plane will go ... anyway, so that was also very enjoyable because I could take my permanent force experience across to these guys, and the unit was just a little unit that went ... and I became 2IC of 3 Parachute Battalion, and I was in the operation, also a large operation, but it wasn't as successful as Cassinga, called Operation Daisy ... and I stayed in Operation Daisy and then I did a few other things in townships and what have you, and then I became ops commander in 4 Parachute Battalion when they started 4 Parachute Battalion, and I ... the boss man then was a colonel that wasn't much liked by most people, and definitely not by me, and he and I were ever butting heads ... and it just wasn't nice any more, so I decided I've had my fill and I left the Defence force ...but I always stayed in the associations and things like that, and met up with the people again, but I wasn't ... I left there a bit and I got involved with a group ... in Natal Command, that were a bit part of the CCB, but I didn't like that ... situation, or the things that have been done, and I left that alone, so I

INTERVIEWER: But there were quite a few soldiers who moved in to the CCB ... how did you see this?

WILLY WARD: I didn't know much about them, because I left Recces by then, it was a long time ago and I left Recces ... so I can't comment too much on it and I don't know what exactly their mission was, I ... the deduction I made that they were more operating in the political fields, and that to me was wrong, as a soldier, because we are soldiers ... well that is basically all I can say about it, but you ... you don't use special forces

operators still operating in the political field ... in the military field, other people do that, it comes under counter intelligence and so forth, it is not a job for recces ...

INTERVIEWER: Let's jump back a few years, let's go back to the FNLA. So here you were working with a group of Angolans who were at some stage part of a ... I mean they were a liberation movement like FAPLA or SWAPO or the MK ...

WILLY WARD: (unsure of speaker) Liberation movements, we always put it in inverted commas hey ...

INTERVIEWER: Yeah ...well they were fighting for independence, and suddenly they found themselves out of the fight, and sort of marginalised and ... I mean how did you feel about taking these people on?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Well you see, there is one thing of principle in leaderships called loyalty, it always works from the top down as to from the bottom up now these guys, when I met them in Lepupa I trained them ...I called them rubbish, if I had my chance to get away I would have done so, but then they went into battle with us, and we shaped ... I read a book about, called The Fortune Battle which explains the whole situation, how they become better and better, as we went along ... and their loyalty started shifting from their FNLA attachment to Chipenda for instance, Africa is a funny place, it always was about strong leaders, not so much about the cause ... anyway they started shifting to us, you see the white guys who were leading them to battle were actually fighting their battles with them, there when the bullets flying around, you'll be there with them, they've never experienced this before, that their own commanders would be there when the fighting is going on, they used to send them to battle, sit back and watch these guys being shot up front and when they come they are running away, and that's ... so forth, but they still, these chaps would go in to battle, so they became very loyal to us, you see they ... and I, in particular, me and my guys, we became very loyal to them. So when the thing collapsed, Savannah collapsed towards the end of 1975 ... when it collapsed and we had to come back, the rug was pulled from under our feet, I couldn't in all honesty, in

all conscience I couldn't leave those guys behind, because what would happen to them ... because their ... UNITA was now fighting against FNLA, and FNLA was fighting against UNITA and MK is fighting against the lot you see and so on ... okay what a situation, and they are family ... so I spoke to the Company Commander Cesaar(?) and said, Well look, we can't leave these guys, we must move them and their families back to a safe area, which is against the ... policy of the Army ... so they didn't agree, but I brought them back anyway, in the end. So they were stuck with these people they didn't know what to do with them, you see, because Jan Breytenbach brought them back against all orders, and so forth but he's stuck with them. I'm not stuck with them they're stuck with me and my black troops. It just so happens that it panned out very nicely because as we withdrew in the next pair of months, SWAPO also came back ... and these chaps, Angolans, knew the area, they knew the terrain, they could speak Portuguese, they knew the people were living there you see, so they come from those areas, so they were the best troops to use against SWAPO in Angola, you see, so suddenly they saw the value they could get ... and I stayed on of course, I was the only guy who ... could handle them, so they left me there for a while and that's when I started retraining them, in counter-guerrilla war situation. I had to form ... they never kept in a proper battalion ...with the staff battalion ... equipped eventually after much struggling, because we had to scrounge to equip them properly with the necessary equipment and weapons and uniforms and so on ... so then I brought their families back, that was the main thing, they came to Vacuca(?) first and then they went off to establish them in the Buffalo Base on the Okavango river, beautiful base, beautiful camp we built there ... and their loyalty had then swung from Angola and Tshipenda to loyalty to the Battalion. I remember saying to them, we had some more guys coming in, over the months, from Angola to come and join and I said, Well look, if you come here to join 32 Battalion ... you don't belong to a tribe or to a political organisation, you now belong to 32 Battalion, 32 Battalion is now your tribe, and I'm the chief of that tribe, so that's where it ...

(chuckles) ... starts and where it stops, because it is useless to talk to them about loyalty to South Africa, they didn't even know what South Africa was, or the South African cause was, you see what I mean, it was loyalty to the unit that was important ... which is very much a British thing, loyalty to your unit.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that that loyalty persists today?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Well look, they've restarted 32 Battalion Association, I haven't had contact with them for years but I am sitting in the wrong part of the world, so in Sedgefield you most (inaudible statement) ... I don't know, I hope it would, I hope it will, it still happens, the guys who were there, they are still loyal, the old guys, they still talk of 32 Battalion ... that is their history you see, so they are there, they contact loyalty to the old 32 Battalion ... unfortunately as you know the Battalion was disbanded in ... '93, as I look back I feel very sore about ... they very unexpectedly and overnight disbanded it ... which is, as I said it was disbanded in 1993, and a lot of ... on the disbandment parade or whatever, anybody who was anybody who could be there was there, and you could see that this thing ... it was a sad story, for everybody it was very, very sad, because of this, because in order to the unit, the white guys, the black guys, they all worked to one unit you see ... and so, something that I haven't manage to come to terms with, not yet, I don't think I ever will ... the President, who is the commanding chief of the SADF then, would unexpectedly, out of the blue, disband the unit after they've been given promises that they would not be disbanded, there were rumours going about, but they were disbanded overnight on the television ... by the spring commander in the SADF ... that's why I handed over 32 ... why I handed over to Parliament ...

INTERVIEWER: Tell me, was there ... does this co-existence between black and white soldiers, did this exist anywhere else in the Defence Force at the time?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Not anywhere, no it didn't, no ... we were the first black operational unit, well they had the Bushmen of course, Bushmen battalion was there, the Bushmen were treated like ... like pets ... they were 31 Battalion, they were known as

Alpha Group, but they were ...sort of a pet subject for the rest, almost like the Ghurkhas, except they were not Ghurkhas, they weren't fighters like the Ghurkhas, but it was nice to go and look at the Bushmen to see ... and so forth ...the trackers and so on ... but this is the first black unit in the South African Defence Force, operational blacks, of course they had blacks in support services and so on ... they also had the Cape Core, I think at the time, but they were not blacks ...

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel like you had the support of the politicians in forming such a unit?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Well look, they were faced with a fait accompli when I ... when I brought them out. I asked General Malan, he was the Chief of the Army ... I didn't ask, he asked me, so what are we going to do with these people? I said, Well General, the only thing you can do is to induct them into the South African Army, that is the only thing you can do, and I explained why you see, then he said, Ja I think ja, that's what we must do. So I said then, Can I tell them that, that you reckon they should be inducted into the South African Army ... which, they were not the South African Army, they were just sort of floating around loosely, they were not ...

INTERVIEWER: Were they like a foreign legion?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Like ... ja I suppose you can call them that, a foreign but they were not, they were not ... let me put it this way, in the French Army the foreign legion is part of it you see, but in our army they were ... unattached, they were floating around somewhere, nobody wanted to take charge for them except me, and anyway they were forced to take charge of them, so that is when I had explained to them, after I explained to General Malan, these are the guys you can use on the other side of the border, there are no other South Africans who would be able to operate as effectively as they would, because they were now seasoned soldiers, all of them you see ... so that ... they saw the reason for that, thenit's only then that they said, Okay, ja ...

INTERVIEWER: But I would imagine you would have been faced with a bit of

resentment and jealousy from other parts of the military that you managed to take this group of black soldiers ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: I was facing a lot of commiseration, not jealousy, initially ... because ...

INTERVIEWER: Why?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Commiseration, from other guys, you see, I'm the poor chap you know, that's what we call ... obviously you compare your career that's all you can now ... (laughs) ... But when they saw what happened, because especially when the battle is outstanding, then in our respective town we became a very ... how shall I put it ... to have that ... is very desirable you see, then it became desirable, but they, they were very sceptical in the beginning. In fact they questioned our sitreps, every day you've got to send a sitrep, you know, in battle, during the operation ... they questioned my sitreps. I sent back all the records, (inaudible) of the SWAPO's that got killed, to ultimately show them that we actually ... this is what we could account for ... until they began to accept it, then I kept the rifles back because we needed the rifles, not them ... and so, then it became a desirable destination for every one else, that come and serve with me at the Battalion, it nice to have a record you see, but not in the beginning. In fact they were known as "Jan se kaffers", in the beginning, Jan's kaffirs ...

INTERVIEWER: How did you find the attitude of the ... I mean obviously you had some young white officers now coming into 32 Battalion, and here they were faced with a group of seasoned, well-trained black Angolan soldiers. Were there some attitude adjustments?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Ja, there were ... that there was, ja. What I did was, especially young lieutenants and young corporals and sergeants, who came from infantry school, the junior leaders, they were posted to us, and they would come and join us ... I could not train them all, or retrain them much, all I could do was give them a lecture, and I said, Look you're going to go into the bush, with your platoon, you are going

to operate as guerrillas, in guerrilla-occupied territory, you are going to be the guerrillas, that's what you are going to be, but there is a black sergeant there, a platoon sergeant who knows all about these things. He is going to teach you how to fight this pattern, and these guys settled down quite happily, some of them didn't, they're misfits, but most of them did ... and eventually the platoon sergeants and the two leaders became inseparable, and ... of course as they went along their knowledge and experience increased as well, until it became acceptable to platoons. These platoons tested the men, first how the guys are going to react on a fight, and if they react well on the fight they accepted them ... if you get nil, they wouldn't want to, but fortunately that happened very rarely ... of course I am not talking about guys like WILLY Ward and company, they had the experience, they had more experience, lots more experience than any of the black troops ... but they were immediately accepted you see, so there was no problem there, but it was the young guys. These young guys ... almost to a man, signed on, they were national servicemen ... but to get that motivational thing, there was always that racism thing in the background ... I was amazed how these guys ... it didn't bother them at all, they got stuck in ... there were a few, but I got rid of them, as quickly as I could ... but I didn't want any racism near there, because we were all treated the same way and the same unit, and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander as well, for all of us ... and so, they settled down very, very nicely and ... the Angolans of course are, because they grew up in the Portuguese type of life, they are more Portuguese than they were black, but anyway ... the Angolans were not so concerned about racism, it didn't worry them ... like we over here, in South Africa, you see ...

INTERVIEWER: Didn't have the hang-ups ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Ja ...

INTERVIEWER: WILLY, how did you feel about the FNLA, ex-FNLA people ... and you obviously had new recruits coming in all the time as well, you had new intakes ...

WILLY WARD: New men were dropped (inaudible) ... there were four of us, and we had

with us then, we had three of the most, I think they were very illustrious fighters of the African bush war ... in Danny Rosher, and Swearo and ... Robby Ribeiro ...they of course were part of where we went. They had a few national servicemen doing ... the engineers, and there was a medic, and ... they were also there, so there were a few white people ... but I, right from the work go, I took over, and we immediately led by example, like when we went for PT runs in the morning, my guys were in the front, there was no shirking, because my brief was to train them, to train these guys, and all the training was with my guys part of it all the time, and we also ... and once we started going into .. with different skirmishes that we had, our big problem was when I got back ... now all their commanders didn't go with, their commanders sat in the base camp, and there were more commandants in those units than there was corporals, and I always used to say to Brian, Jeez the worst part of coming back is all these guys now, because we've been successful, they want to hug you, you see and ... you end up hugging all these commanders, ... and I think that they thought that they would take the ... glory for it all, you see ... I must admit that the very first two days, it was ... there was chaos ... and there was no way you could resign ... (laughs) ... your headquarters were miles away, you couldn't speak the language, I was instructed to try and talk to them in their language, so then I thought, hang on, it's going to be difficult to ... we will learn to speak it, there are a lot of these guys working on the mines and they could speak Fanagalo, and some of them could speak Afrikaans also ...so, let them rather adopt our ways and so that, immediately I let them come up to my level, than we go down to their level ... and that's the very first theme I set in this base camp, and then this one morning there was a bit of a rebellion, but I had a group of guys there from Zaire, they were also smart, they kept themselves (inaudible word) ...

INTERVIEWER: (inaudible term) from ?

WILLIE WARD: Yes ... ja, and they really were smart, these guys ...

INTERVIEWER: Willy you mentioned these Portuguese soldiers, Roshu and Seattle

and Costa and Ribeiro(?), where did they come from?

WILLIE WARD: Well Danny come from Mozambique and then went to ... I think General Loots recruited him ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Ja-a ... when we the two colonies collapsed, as it were, there were a lot of Portuguese capture involvement ... (inaudible sentence) ...Ribeiro was actually working for DGS OP, like Danny Roshu was, in the end he was working with (inaudible name) but I know, Robbie Ribeiro was a paratrooper in the Portuguese army, and Costa and Dispero, they were working for P, the disciplinary police ... Danny was in the north during the Colonial war if you will call it that, he was leading a bunch of blacks (inaudible) against FRELIMO, in the Nyasaland province and Zambezi ... so he wasn't very popular when FRELIMO took over ... (laughs) ...so he had to gap it, so he gapped to South Africa. The same applies to ... Costa and (inaudible name), they were P20 (?) Police, and they were in Angola again, see they were locking people up, from the MPLA and UNITA and FNLA and so, so they weren't very popular either, so they had to gap it as well. I'm not sure how Robbie ... he was

WILLIE WARD: He was from Guinea Bissau ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: He was Guinea Bissau, but I don't know, I'm not sure how he got to us, because he was ... he was working with a chap, he's a professional hunter, in Mozambique, I know that ... but I've got a feeling he was also to do with P ...I'm not quite sure, so they all had to gap it, because otherwise their lives would not have been worth ... not a cent, that's how he ended up with us. Quite a lot of them came over and they went ... some of them, they were all sent to me by General Loots to come and join me here, then I put them through a selection course, and only the four of them went ... the others were all considered to be unsuccessful, so they were actually recces when they served ...

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a little about Danny Rocher who is a bit of a ...

WILLIE WARD: Mandell(?), when I got there ... there was an immediate clash of wills

because Jan and I came as the commander of that, and up to them he had quite a bit of free reign on his own, now he had to fall in under this sergeant-major, which I was although the rank that was given me by the FNLA was Commander of the Salwat(inaudible), so Danny and I, he had his own ways ... one of the things was my military background and just my own personal ... he, they smoked dope, okay they were a bunch of smokers, and I immediately took him on, I said I've got no problems with it, that is your own belief but there are young South African troops here, and ... those are the national servicemen that were with us, and of course I don't want to end up in a scrap to have to be kicking butt in scraps because people aren't getting up and decided that they are so jumped-up that they are not going to fight them ... or the opposite might do that, they are so highly ... full of this ganja that they'll take on the Russian army, you see, and compromise the rest of us, so this was a bit of a case, so I think what we did ...my forward base which was by Shilonga, we sent Danny there, Danny and Sverro(?) and Robbie were the main men by Shilonga, and I remember Danny saying to me, we'd had a scrap, we bumped into the French Foreign Legion, they'd bumped Danny and them the night before, because they were actually working with UNITA, and that was our area because the FNLA's guerrilla control area that we had ... this relationship between UNITA and our commanders, that they must stay out of our area, we'll control that area, but UNITA them ... I think Savimbi saw a way to come in there and use Villa de Armada as a base camp for himself, and he had these French working with him ... French Foreign Legion, about fifteen of them, and I ... they'd attack Robbie and them the night before, and there was quite a big scrap at Bashilonga where one of their, a French captain, was killed ...

INTERVIEWER: He was the son of a General ...

WILLIE WARD: That's right, he was killed and there was a lot of other ... there was a lot of the UNITA guys killed and wounded and things like that ... anyway I captured this whole lot, it was a quite ...

INTERVIEWER: That was where you got you Honoris Crux, wasn't it?

WILLIE WARD: No-o, that was a bit later on ... a bit later on. Anyway we ... this was just a mean African game of hot poker...

INTERVIEWER: How many is legionnaires? The French ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Well they were ... actually they were ... what happened with the legionnaires first of all I'm going to go back to the scene where Savimbi, you know, sent his guys into our area. I've been up to ... about couple of weeks before, I'd been up, forgotten the name of the place, north of the Cuando river, we flew in there and we discussed with Savimbi our various areas of responsibility, and this was our area of responsibility you see ... this Villa de Armada by Shilonga and so on, and his was to stay north of the Cuando river ... but typical Savimbi, I never had much time for Savimbi, he was a sly bastard ... and typical Savimbi he pushed north of the ... instead of contacting, because there was a need for contact via military intelligence with me, to say well look we are coming south there, we would like to ... because they are pushing us from the north, he did not, he decided that he was going kick out FNLA you see. I don't think he was aware of the fact that, of my guys like Willie Bruwer ... he decided that he was going to take a big, bloomin chance so he sent his best commando-type unit in which these ... French Foreign Legion, in fact they all paid for this ... the French Foreign Legion paratroopers are the cream of the cream, make no mistake, they were green berets. Now a chap pitched up, his name was Villiere(?), he was 2IC to Balcano(?) ... pitched up at Windo(?) and he asked me whether I ... could find out from our people, what's happened to the French Foreign Legion guys ... (laughs) ... you know ... I'd seen them, a couple of weeks before at the Lecords(inaudible), so that is what I saw, have they lost contact with them, they don't know what's happened to them ... so when this thing happened between Willie and the French Foreign Legion and this Sokolonof(?), it is a British Colony, with all that beautiful equipment which we managed to get hold of ... (inaudible sentence) ... and this happened, I went back to him and said, Well we made

contact with ... (laughs) ... with your people, and they'd been caught by Willy Ward! ...
(laughs) ... and they are now at Villa de Armada ... he wasn't very happy with that .
Anyway ...

INTERVIEWER: They must have been a bit embarrassed, did they have any idea who you were and where you came from?

WILLIE WARD: You know the irony of the whole thing is that I heard there was a scrap at Bashilonga, we had contact with them and I heard that Robbie and them had been kicked ... there's a problem ... and I had one Unimog, old Betsy, and we jumped into old Betsy ... and it was ... no there were no other guys, I left all the white guys, I went on my own, just myself, Titos my translator, and Guinea Bissau my platoon commander, and what I could fit into the back of the Unimog, twelve guys, and there we went. It was a left-hand drive, the Unimog, and I was sitting on the right hand side, and this bloody door handle, there was something wrong with the door handle, and I thought if anything happens now, how do I get out with this door handle, how do I get out of this door quick enough, I'm still looking at this ... and the next thing I heard this guy said: Mata, and I looked up, and there is a Panelot, now Panelot is a French armoured car, standing with its 60 mil gun showing this way, and ... we just bailed out, we stopped the bloody thing and we just ...

INTERVIEWER: Did the door work all of a sudden? ... (laughs) ...

WILLIE WARD: Yes, I got out ... (laughs) ... I think I still had the door in my hand ... and then as we ... I heard the machine running, obviously that is why they couldn't hear us, their machine was running, and they were all at the engine, all three of them were at the engine at the back ... so I went up and arrested them you see, in Africa, I mean I caught them and ... I immediately thought they were Cubans, because what's the French doing ... I don't know about the French in Africa ... so I lay them down, in a long line like this, and Titos was with me, and Guinea Bissau and I had them hold each other's boots, lying flat down like that, and then they just "please don't shoot us, please, you killed one

of our captains last night and you killed some of our people”, and I said, Just keep quiet, I said, do as I say, I searched them quickly, couldn’t find ... because they’d left their weapons in the Panelot anyway, they didn’t have any weapons in the back ...so the guys says, I’m French, I’m French ... so I said, listen pull the other leg man, don’t talk kak to me, I said, You know what are the French doing in Africa? So he says, Please we’ve got wounded people, there’s women and children with us ... anyway there is women and children with us, and just radio back, there’s the radio. Anyway I took the radio, I didn’t let anyone get up, they stayed on the ground, they didn’t move, I said just give me the frequency and I radioed back. Told him the situation, I said I captured your Panelot, and I’ve got your guys here, I said ... so he says, Please man, we’re French, don’t shoot any more, you killed one of our people last night ... so I said, No fine, I said, I’ll tell you what I’ll do, I’m sending this truck to you, put all your weapons in this truck, all the weapons, and you come behind the truck, walking with your hands in the air, okay? In the meantime I climbed in the turret of this armed car, spinned the turret around so it faces where they are coming from, I had my RPD7 with me also, put my RPD7 down next to me, I’ve got my own weapon, and there... I’ve got a beard like this, I’m wearing a little cap, a little camouflage cap, I’m camouflaging and I’m wearing a pair of tekkie boots ... and a beard ... so this lot arrives, and they are all standing ...

INTERVIEWER: Wait, how many of you were there?

WILLIE WARD: We were about twelve plus the two of us, we were fourteen of us ...

INTERVIEWER: Okay ...

WILLIE WARD: ... but now they don’t know this, these guys are all in ... laying down ... the only thing they can see, they can see three people, they see me, the interpreter, and they see Guinea Bissau okay ... now we are all standing here by this, now they are standing at the bottom of me ... so the guy says, Who are you. I said, It’s got nothing to do with you who I am, I said, who are you? He said, We’re French. I said don’t talk kak with me, and I said, what are you French doing here? He says to me, no we are with

UNITA. I said, I don't believe you, UNITA killed my guys anyway ... a week or two back in the Serpa Pinto Hospital, some of my guys were shot by UNITA, so I said, so that doesn't cut with me anyway, so then he looks up and he says, Why? Why you're so cross? Maybe you haven't washed for a while ... (laughs) ... Jeez I went (inaudible word) ... I'll kill you, you basted, don't talk to me like that ... No, no, no ... I said, Don't drop your hands! ... so then he looks around and he says to me, and he looks and he only sees these three guys, so he says, Maybe if we fight we win here today ... Okay but now they've got no weapons, I've got all their weapons in the truck now, they've got no weapons, they might have side arms, I did not see any side arms ... but anyway, so ... I said, Majamba! So I just called one or two of the guys, and they got up, one that side, one that side, and I said, You want to see all my other guys? He says, No, no, no, please, please, please, because now Majamba is a big guys, and he was really ... you know. Anyway so ... then he says to me, I still don't believe... so then he says to me, but now I can see there are wounded people there, and there are women and children, because they had their own prostitutes travelling with them, you know, local Melaties, they are this group ... and there were older women and children ... so he says to me, Do you know Hannes Marais? So ... I said, what do you mean do I know Hannes Marais? He is a Springbok rugby player, he says yes. And do you know Ben Waduga? I said yes I know Ben Waduga, he played at the same time as Frik du Preez played, he was a lock, they were great adversaries ... I said he is a very good French rugby player. He says I come from the same town as Ben Waduga, I play with Ben Waduga ... so then I thought, no fok I don't want to (inaudible), how would a Cuban know about Ben Waduga? So I said, okay I'm worried about these wounded people, I'm putting you all in ... because they had vehicles with them too, I mean they had Combis, and they had a Citroen, and they had beautiful other weapons you know ... weaponry and stellar missiles and ...

INTERVIEWER: Did you suspect that Savimbi may have been with them at some stage?

WILLIE WARD: Well no I don't, at that stage I didn't even think of it ... Although this was Savimbi's Citroen ... this was Savimbi's Citroen, anyway so ... I loaded them all into the Combis and I said, Fine now go ... because I'm worried about where Danny and them are, and I sent half my guys with them, and they went across. Then I found Danny and them, came out of the bush and so ... with his guys, so there were even more guys that could go with, and that's when Danny came to me and he said to me, You were lucky today. I said Danny, I was prepared and I was a better poker player than he was ... (laughs) ... I mean I called his bluff, and ja, so ... then Danny ... we moved up to Bashilonga and Danny then moved to Lavinga, Danny and them moved to Lavinga, and they started handling it, and all I did was, I re-supplied Danny, I did all his re-supplies to him.

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: You see what ... what obviously was happening from the leader side, they were being pushed out of the northern parts ... and they decided to set up shop even though they didn't know how, but we were there, our area, nobody told us, he didn't bother to tell us ... that's how he operated you see, he was anti-FNLA and so ... so he just carried down here and he decided to tackle us and drive us out, you see ... knowing full well that if it succeeded, we wouldn't have come back, because Military Intelligence was handling UNITA, and they would have stopped us from taking them on. But this is just one of the many things that have happened between FNLA and UNITA, FNLA (inaudible word) UNITA and myself, Savimbi and myself, and ... right to the end we never were pals, so though 32 Battalion fought alongside them towards the end, you know... they always despised the FNLA and UNITA guys, from those days they never got on ...

WILLIE WARD: No they never actually ... got ... Well when they got back to the base, to Villa Nova de Armada, my guys wanted to kill them. I didn't notice, because I'm worried about Danny and them, but I've sent protection with them ... anyway what happened is then ... there is a jail at Villa Nova de Armada and they locked themselves

in the jail, O'Brian and them, and they put them all in there, and said, No we must wait for Coweli to come back, okay ... but they had stolen all their (inaudible word), taken their watches off, they really looted, these bloody okes, they'd taken everything ... not the French, the now the French they put in our food store, the French and their concubines, all the girls and what-have-you, they put their in the food store, which is next to where we slept, our sleeping accommodation, but it had a fence around it so ... and we kept the fence, because I still didn't trust them, I was very duzy-duzy about the whole thing, and now he's talking paratroopers, now all paratroopers are still together and things like that ... so this Frenchman comes to me, he says, The ladies want to know if they can wash, so I said we do all our washing in the river, I said I can send somebody down there to, just to protect because they had to stand on the side just to watch if there are crocodiles or anything like that ... I said, no, no, no, they use the shower, but the shower didn't have a curtain, so there were there ladies showering in front ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Of all the troops ...

WILLIE WARD: ... in front of my troops ... (laughs) ... and the boys have been away for quite a while already, even the ... kudas were starting to wink at them you know ... (laughs) ...

WILLIE WARD: And then I said to my guys, you are not sleeping tonight, I said you are staying awake all night ... because ... then I radioed over, they were going to send a vehicle, and they sent a aircraft the next day, that took the women and the children and the wounded, and the French, and the rest ... the men went on the ferry to (inaudible name).

WILLIE WARD: Some of those guys actually started ... ended up fighting with ... 32 Battalion ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: And the commander of that, the commander was ...what was his name again ... hell of a nice chap ... he became a mechanic, he was a major in the UNITA army, and he became a mechanic, a very good mechanic in 32 Battalion, he

was quite happy there ... (inaudible statement) ... with the rank of Commandant in the UNITA army to the rank of Staff Sergeant (inaudible word) and he did very, very well, actually ... and unfortunately those girls, they ended up in a similar situation in Bravo in Buffalo Base ... (laughs) ... after all it was war you know, we captured them ... (laughs).

INTERVIEWER: Tell me a bit about life at Buffalo Base, it wasn't just a ... camp for soldiers, there were families and children ...

WILLIE WARD: But initially it was chaos ... initially we moved in, when we moved in to establish the base, I think we didn't do a proper recce at that stage, in a rather wet area, and everybody was just staying ... because we were still busy, we were preparing for Ops Cobra and I was, I'd gone into further ... took my troops and went into a camp further down called Cheetah camp, and we started training to go to Ops Cobra, and then the family was left back at Pickupow(inaudible) remember that was the original .. Pickupow which was Woodpecker, the Woodpecker - Carpenter, you know his nom de guerre was Carpenter ...

INTERVIEWER: Yes there is a street named after him in Pomfret ...

WILLIE WARD: Ja ... anyway, so ... talking about Pomfret, no not Pomfret ... I saw a photo, I think I've got it on e-mail, of the graveyard of 32 Battalion in the Caprivi ... it's up ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Anyway, you see what happened was ... obviously after Savimbi came, then Savimbi's march to the south was followed by a march of MPLA, FAPLA, and he had manned ... when Danny Rocher was driven out of Bashilonga, we sent a team back to Bashilonga, to go and man that forward base, and anyway, FAPLA came down and there was a huge scrap ... if I say huge scrap, it was an intense scrap, because there were only a few people remaining in Bashilonga (unsure of audio) with their tanks and so forth, that's where he got his Honoris Crux, when he was doing that ... he and a few guys were stopping the tanks, or trying to stop the tanks, they were shot from the tanks and the (inaudible words) and the fire stops via the M's (inaudible

audio ...)were taken out and so forth, and they shot quite a lot of the FAPLA, of the infantry .. but that's where the ... on the attack they shot down the tankers and so on and so forth, they had to locate their forward position for Bashilonga, when this chappie was badly wounded, and he was carrying him for several kilometres ... on the fight(inaudible word) ... but then of course they had to make (inaudible word) Bashilonga and they were driving south, and what happened was that they were following up and Willy was trying, well he was actually succeeding, in slowing them down by planting mines .. which ... we did not know at the time that we would succeed or not, but I got then instruction from Headquarters in Grootfontein, 110 Headquarters, that all my troops must now get out of Angola ... they were getting a bit worried that, I don't know why they were so worried, but anyway they were worried, that there would be follow-up coming across the border, because we were sort-of, they thought they were after 32 Battalion and we are sort-of the bait ... if we can take the bait away they would stop, that's what they thought, that's General Viljoen thoughts ... anyway, so we didn't have much time to wreck the base ... so that's when we ended up in the Langa(?) river, and ... that's why we settled there, eventually, but it is by accident that we ended up there, basically, we weren't supposed to be there, we were supposed to be in Angola you see ...

INTERVIEWER: This retreat from Angola, what did this signify for you ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Well, to me ... I wasn't agreeing with that, I mean we could have ... we could have fought ... you see the problem with this is that, at our level, we understood what guerrilla warfare meant, our Ops didn't know what guerrilla warfare meant, they were not ... they would think in terms of conventional, semi-conventional war, they saw battalions moving, brigades moving, and never saw little troops biting, biting, biting and so on, and I would have preferred to have kept Willy in Niconi banga(inaudible name) along the Quito river, to attack the rear and so on, to shoot a guy here, and take out a tank there and so on and so forth, but they did not understand that, but in the end ... you must remember that part of Africa is, infrastructure-wise, there is virtually nothing, so

they came down all the way to the border, that is now FAPLA, they couldn't stay there because they were starving to death, because nothing got through to them, so in the end they all withdrew, eventually, couldn't keep what they had ... As a matter of fact, when he got to the border, I was ordered by (inaudible words) to move my base from what was then known as Buffalo, no Picaplant(inaudible) sorry, the name was Picaplant and to find a place somewhere else, and ... because we're still the bait, before they would come across the border, and pack us there at Picaplant, the boarder was only about 15, 20 kilometres away from Picaplant, so I said yes sir, I'll do that sir, because I (inaudible words) I didn't want to and he said you will, it was an order, so I said right sir, I'll catty out your order. So we moved our base to Picaplant, about 5 kilometres upriver nearer to the enemy, which then became known as Buffalo Base, so when General Viljoen came up on the air, to confirm that I've moved my troops away from Picaplant, I said yes I have indeed moved my troops away from Picaplant, we were then even closer to the enemy ... (laughs) ... than before ...

INTERVIEWER: But did you feel like you were bait ... like you were a source of provocation for FAPLA at that stage? I mean was it you they were really after or was it UNITA ...?

(Over speaking)

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: I think Willy will bear now, we knew that FAPLA overshot their goal ... had shot their goal, because of the terrain. They wouldn't be able to sustain a mechanised force so far away from Serpa Pinto, which was their nearest base you see, and that was a long, long, long, way away ... from where they were, we knew that, we knew that they would run out of steam, so it didn't worry me. I think they were overreacting, our guys overreacted ... Anyway so Willy got a Honoris Crux silver out of it ...and we got a beautiful base out of it, so ...

INTERVIEWER: Would you like to tell me about the ...

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: Honoris Crux?

INTERVIEWER: Ja, the Honoris Crux.

WILLIE WARD: Well the Colonel and I had spoken many times about it, and I've spoken to other people about it, I always maintain there is a very thin line between bravery and stupidity ... (chuckles) ... because you know you don't stand there and say to yourself right I'm going to do this. Bearing in mind that up until then we'd been successful with whatever we did, okay ... we had this bravado, and we'd taken ... we were like little Jack Russell terriers you know, I mean we'd taken on the bloody French Foreign Legion and nothing could stop us now. So I had this base camp, I had Bashilonga, which is quite a nice little Portuguese aldeia(?) you know that had little lovely houses with nice verandas and ...

INTERVIEWER: But you didn't like the idea of people in town, did you?

COL JAN BREYTENBACH: No ... he ...

WILLIE WARD: No, he told me to get out, you know get out of town and into the side areas, you know get into the bush ... but we, the two days before we had ... I had blown the bridge on the way ... there were two bridges from between Cuito Cuanavale and Bashilonga, the one was a wooden bridge and the one was a concrete bridge. Now the wooden bridge we blew, and we mined the road from Longa, Cuito Cuanavale the road which is high up, there is a turn-off that then comes to Bashilonga, we mined that road, so we had virtually ... there was no way that they could get into us, okay, they were going to ride into mines and they couldn't get out of that bridge, so they could only come we canalise them, we could only get to them over the bridge, the concrete bridge, and then they would hit our landmines at the bottom, so we had done this all this, and Colonel used to drop in every now and then with our rations and drop in a bottle of KWV brandy for us, you see ... and some of my commanders, myself and Jan, we sat down and had our fire buckets and we'd make coffee, and we'd put a tot of brandy and we ... just had a drink to our success you see, and we were great, and how we're going to sort out the rest of the world's problems you see ... and ...we'd go to bed, and the next morning I

hear this (rumbling sound) it is vehicle movement, the immediate ... then one of my guys came inside, now I've got a guard, I've got an early warning post 7 kilometres down, and ... at a place called Bongi, that's just as you come over the bridge that I'd blown, up onto the top there was a little, it used to be a king move but there was nothing in it, and this is where my forward base is, so ... the guy comes to me and he says to me he can hear trucks. So I say I can hear them also ... and the very thing that goes through my mind, there was no ... your logistics, on a 130 kilometres from Villa Nova de Armada but it takes you five and a half hours to ride that, because it is horrible road ... okay this was one of the things that got to FAPLA, because the communication lines ... anyway so they ... and I thought to myself, ag jissus what am I going to do with all these bloody trucks again ... not thinking anything else ...

INTERVIEWER: You thought they were your trucks?

WILLIE WARD: No, no they are not my trucks, no these ... no I'm going to take these trucks ...

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay ...

WILLIE WARD: Ja, what do I do with them now again? I just got rid of all this lot, I've got more equipment standing at Villa Nova de Armada at the moment, I actually radioed Rundu and said we don't need your equipment, we'll fight with what we've got. Anyway, so this is South Africa, I took a few guys, I took ... at Guinea Bissau there's always a lot more protection, I took him and a few guys and we went across and then through the early morning post at Bongi, set up a mortar there and we had that ... 110mm B-10 Recoilless cannon, without sides ... so went down to, I always went down to the river where I'd blown the river a week before, and I set up an ambush on the side of the river, now we sit and waiting you see, hiding behind the bush, got an RPG7 across my lap, Guinea Bissau this side, and I've got a 60mm mortar with me, and a FNLNG ... and I hear this (grumbling sound) was the truck ... and I laid mines on the other side coming up to the bridge, and I heard it stop. And then start up again and continue. And then it

stopped. But I can't see anything now, and I thought, o shit they must have found our mines ... and then the next thing Guinea Bissau says to me, he says Ka Willy, aikona lo rubber tire wena lo Caterpillar .. and this tank sticks its nose across the top, but he is riding quite fast, these tanks, he rides over the top and he ... there is no bricks there anymore but he gets himself into a position where he is holed down, so he can't bring any of his weapons to bear on where I am, he doesn't know I'm there because I'm in an ambush ... so I let rip with the RPG7 and I hit him between the bogey and the turret and immediately it just dies, and it starts cooking and burning and that ... I get , what do they call it – bok koors, I get tank koors ... (laughs) ...I want to see this thing burn now, but I've only got three bombs, so only the third bomb does it start burning, and as the guys jump out, of course they get shot, my guys are into them, but then the next thing there is another bloody tank ... instead of having, you know, it's all right to have, on your weapon, like the Cowboys they put a little ...

INTERVIEWER: Notch ...

WILLIE WARD: Notch you know to have one tank, but I could have had two tanks if I wasn't so stupid that morning you see ... anyway I thought uh-uh ... and he can bear his weapon onto us, although he was a bit high because he was flying over our heads now ... so I decided no, I'm on a little Kibbelwagen which is a Volkswagen Jeep, standing just a little back, so I run to my Kibbelwagen, and I jump into it, but like anything else there is no keys or anything, it would start with wires, so it goes (stuttering car sound), it doesn't want to start you see ... and the next thing, the bush next to me just disappears you see ...that 12,7 that they've got mounted on the T54's ... (growling sound) so I thought, hang on a bit this is where I gap it ... so I grabbed my RPG7 and I start running, into the bush, and I shout at Guinea Bissau that they must take cover and get back to the hill at the top. I didn't know at that stage but a truck had passed by at the bottom too, loaded with troops in it, and Guinea Bissau had opened up into this truck, and well ... the sitreps, the reports we got afterwards from them, you that that they do, there were about twenty

killed in that truck when Guinea Bissau opened up there ... anyway I ran to through this mango field and every time ... now they're shooting at me, and as I left my Kibbelwagen, it got hit by that 100mm gun ... the force actually threw me forward a bit, anyway then I ran up to where Jan was, and Jan was at this mortar, but no sights, so ... I got that mortar into action, so old Jan ... the bedding in plate you know it's Angola sand, the plate just about disappears into it, Jan throws the bomb over them, and I said "Jan jy moet terugkom", so he comes back with it, he's got the "slinger" and things like that ... and the thing was barrel up and throws in another one, a bit from the left ... anyway I said to Jan we're in amongst them now, just turn your handle and then throw another bomb, and as it is, we had a big helping hand there that morning ... it's got a turret near the enemy(?) and the bloody bomb went right in there ... so that made them all pull back a bit, because they must have thought, jissus now we're up against these okes here now, this is a big lot.

So I said to Jan and them look, we are taking strain, get them to go, I'll hold the fort here, retreat, get in to Bashilonga, get everything ready in Bashilonga and pull out of Bashilonga, tell Gideon to stay, we'll blow the bridge outside Bashilonga on the way ... and I got I behind the big tank, but again those sights! Now the tank's gone quite a way off, I can see him where he's standing, he must be about 800metres away from me by now, so then I look through the barrel, you know you open the barrel up, I look through the barrel and then I get the tank in the barrel, we put the bomb in, close it up and I fire it ... boom ... so, look it would have been lucky if we hit the tank, it would have been nice to hit the tank, but we were close to it, so in other words our bombs were falling ... in the ground area, so it makes him move all the time, so with him moving he can't bear onto us, you know, the fire isn't bearing onto us so accurately as he would expect ... anyway when everybody had left, I decided no, this is time for me to go too, they left the Landrover for me, so Graham's B-10 is fucked also ... firing about thirteen rounds, so I put it in the back ... we stick it in the back and I try and start this Landrover ... the same thing again, the damn Landrover wouldn't start ... so out of the B-10, quickly dig a hole,

bury the bloody thing – because it is sand, it is Angola sand, cover it, I said, Right let's go ... got about four guys with me and we started running back, and we hadn't gone ten metres, when a bomb fell between us.... **END OF TAPE 2**

TO BE CONTINUED ON DOCUMENT TAPE 0/05

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