

8. Solitary confinement for a period determined by tribunal.

9. The maximum penalty.

10. Any other penalty not included herein but appearing in the schedule of penalties for grave or serious crimes and violations.

**Rules and Regulations Covering the Handling of Weapons and Explosives of our Movement.**

#### Introduction

Among the most sacred duties of a soldier in MK is to protect and preserve the weaponry and other war material of our army – in certain circumstances even with his life. The loss of a weapon would be regarded in the same light as the loss of a limb and has serious consequences for the body of our army.

Our weaponry and other war materials are there to be used against our enemy and must, at all times, be maintained in a proper state of combat readiness and must only be used to further our revolution. This is the duty of every organ and individual soldier entrusted with the task of handling such material.

**In the interest of our revolution the following rules and regulations will be strictly enforced.**

1. The Politico-Military Council under the direction of the NEC shall be the organ which decides on the distribution and use of all weapons and explosives in any given area.

2. All members of the ANC who possess a personal weapon or weapons are under obligation to declare it or them to the authorised organs or persons in the Movement for registration and for determining whether the comrade should be authorised to keep the weapon or surrender it.

3. All weapons not supplied by authorised persons in the hands of individuals or groups must be reported and declared immediately. Failing to fulfil this requirement constitutes a serious offence against the Movement and carries with it a heavy punishment.

4. Unauthorised possession and use of weapons is strictly prohibited.

5. It is strictly forbidden to point a weapon, loaded or otherwise, at any person other than our enemy.

6. It is serious offence to abandon without proper cause, lose, misuse, neglect or damage weapons, ammunition and explosives.

7. Unauthorised exchange, barter or transfer of a weapon(s) is strictly forbidden.

8. All weapons, ammunition and explosives must be handled by authorised persons and must be totally concealed in public except during combat marches in our training camps and schools and where permission is granted to have weapons for the defence of ANC personnel and property.

9. All records, inventories of all war materials have to be kept by Ordnance, Security and by any organ entrusted with such material.

10. The use of materials for emergency purposes has to be reported to the appropriate authority.

11. The security and care of weapons shall be the responsibility of those entrusted with them.

12. All transfer and movement of war materials from one area to the

other shall be entrusted to the Ordnance Department

13. Safety measures must be observed when handling weapons and explosives.

14. Authorised persons are not allowed to handle weapons under the influence of liquor.

# THE BATTLE OF NYATUWE

*(Related by Comrade Rogers, a Wankie veteran).*

WE reached Nyatuwe early in the morning before sunrise. After establishing an outpost and detailing some comrades for guard duties, I, Masimini and the overall commander left for reconnaissance around the area. Nyantuwe is a river but it was dry at the time.

On the side we had camped there was a small bush which provided good cover against airplanes, helicopters, and distant people. A hundred metres from this bush, on the north-western side of the river, there was a hillock with huge rocks on top. On the other side there was dry elephant grass.

The hillock was a very strategic position because from it you could observe allround and would be in a position to spot the enemy from afar. The sector of fire also would be 360 degrees. But we couldn't occupy it because of lack of cover from the air. After scouting the area we decided to have only one outpost with all-round defence, everybody sleeping at his position.

The sun was about to rise. We had decided to camp there till 16.30 hours. We would then clear the area of traces for an hour and continue with our march at 17.30 hours. After having meals I went to sleep. Our outpost was near, just at the edge of the forest, and my position was  $\pm 20m$  from the outpost.

At about 0.7.00 hrs a spotter plane circled over our position twice. We ignored it. Just when I was beginning to fall asleep, I think at 08.30 hrs, a deafening salvo of automatic rifles fire from all directions broke the silence. From the sound it was clear the weapons were not ours. Then I heard a boer voice bellowing: "SURRENDER"

When I lifted my head a long burst went off and the ZAPU comrade who was manning the outpost 20m from me was hit. The enemy was firing from hip position and the noise made by their weapons overwhelmed ours. Their fire pinned me down. I lay flat as I was on the ground, with bullets hitting the

sand all around me.

This sudden volley from the enemy, coupled with white men voices shouting "surrender" unnerved some of the comrades. There was some little confusion. But fortunately some of the comrades took position and returned fire. Masimini was shouting on top of his voice saying he will shoot any son-of-a-bitch who ran away, ordering them to fire back. Others had merely taken cover and were not firing at the enemy.

I heard Masimini calling my name, coming towards my direction. Besides him there were Kid Marongrong (ZAPU) and Sibanyoni, nicknamed Ntsimbikayigobi. They saw I was pinned down, Masimini and Kid had sub-machine guns and Sibanyoni a light machine-gun. With long burst the three guns spoke, and the enemy was forced to take cover.

In a few seconds I was up, took my bag and gun, told Masimini and Sibanyoni to follow me and ordered Kid to cover me. On the way I met Zami (Bothwell Tamane) who was alone manning another position, firing at the enemy. The fire that side was very heavy. I thought the enemy could be trying to make a breakthrough that side. I instructed Sibanyoni to take position besides Zami with his L.M.G. and ordered Zami to cease fire and wait till the enemy was 50m away. I told him that the day was still young and we had to be careful not to exhaust our supplies of ammunition. "Our survival depends on our accuracy," I said. I also gave them their sectors of fire.

Suddenly the enemy burst out from the trees and there were helicopters hovering over us. We took positions (I and Masimini), joined by Sharp (MK). We were five. None opened fire. The enemy was firing from the hip, rushing towards us. When I estimated they were 50m and their fire was already pinning us down, I replied with my sub-machine guns.

Hell broke loose. We concentrated our fire where the enemy had taken cover and we are certain we injured and killed many. I signalled to Zami and Masimini to cease fire. We waited for about 3 minutes during which the fire from the enemy had subsided. I retreated with both Zami and Masimini. I was going to collect the third L.M.G. which I gave to Zami. My main worry was the hillock. If we could allow the enemy to capture it our position would be very precarious. We came out of the bush and ran towards the hillock. When we were at the foot of the hillock a helicopter appeared. It opened fire at us with its 12.7mm machine gun. We ran back to the bush and took cover.

The enemy sprayed the bush and the foot of hillock with a hail of bullets. This alone indicated their interest in the hillock. The enemy suddenly appeared on top of the hillock. The white officer shouted: "surrender, you're surrounded." This was communicated to us in Shona and Ndebele through an interpreter. The comrades were waiting for me to issue the command to open fire.

I crawled out of the bush into the open space and saw the white officer, his interpreter, his communication officer beside him and another African. Then I asked Ronnie Dube (ZAPU) . . . to translate and shout at them the following "we will never surrender!" Ronnie said it twice and their interpreter translated. I then signalled that we open fire.

We opened a heavy volley, concentrated on the hilltop. An African and the white officer (major) were shot down. The communication officer was pinned down between the rocks. I ordered Sibanyoni and Ronnie to concentrate fire on him and also provide us with cover.

I took Zami, Masimini and Donda and gave them positions where I expected the enemy would appear from. And from that position they would also be able to cover the hillock more effectively. I ordered that under no circumstances were they to leave that position. I knew I was giving this order to true soldiers. I told them that the success of the group's mission depended on that hillock.

Both Zami and Masimini were snipers. Zami was once Chief of Ordnance in Kongwa (the first MK camp in Tanzania) where he used to zero Frelimo's weapons and ours. Masimini was trained as a detachment commander in the Soviet Union. I knew he had courage even before we had contact with the enemy, courage that had been tempered by the commando course he underwent in Egypt. He is the man who saved my life at the beginning of this battle.

It is in the afternoon and the fire from the enemy, both from the air and ground, is so heavy, especially on the hillock, where nothing except dust could be seen. There were two helicopters attacking us from above. To combat them we would all open long burst simultaneously, aiming at the pilot, the door with the 12.7mm machine-gun and the tail where we suspected the fuel tank was.

The first helicopter entered our sector of fire and flew away unscathed. So did the second. But when the first one came back for the second time it did not last long within our sector and we saw smoke escaping from its tail. It never came back. Later on during interrogation (after we'd been captured) we were asked if we had armour-piercing bullets or heavy machine-guns. No explanations were given for those questions but we later gathered from the special branch men that that helicopter was damaged though it managed to limp back to base.

Mhambi came from the hillock, to report that Masimini and Bothwell were injured. Masimini's arm had been hit and the bone was piercing through the flesh. After he had been dressed he continued firing with his light machine-gun. Bothwell was hit in the leg. Mhambi also told us that there were many boer corpses strewn all over Masimini's sector.

At that moment the helicopters came back in full force, with heavy reinforcement from the ground. Mhambi could not go back to the hillock to attend Masimini under that helicopter fire. From the hillock only one light machine-gun could be heard constantly. Masimini's could be heard after long intervals. Soon thereafter the other L.M.G. went silent, only Masimini's and Zami's sub-machine gun could be heard.

It was now late in the afternoon towards sunset. We were able to send M.O's, and other comrades to go and assist fetch Masimini and Donda from the hillock. They found Donda late. He was hit by a 12.7 mm bullet in the back, taking out a big chunk of flesh. After sunset I went to see Masimini. He was in a bad state, having lost lots of blood. He couldn't move his arm at all. We tried all we could to carry him along, from carrying him on our backs to using make-shift stretchers but to no avail. He told us to leave him behind and proceed, "the corridor must be opened at all cost," he said. We left Masimini there with his weapon and ammunition and took advantage of the night that had fallen to break out of the encirclement and continue our march home. Masimini was murdered by the enemy the following day.

What enabled us to hold out for the whole day against such heavy

odds I think was the fact that the enemy did not know our strength. It was also their first experience to be defied when they commanded: "surrender" and be replied with fire instead. Never before had they lost such a large number of white soldiers, including commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

Those who might think this is just a propaganda exercise should refer to the Rhodesian and South African papers of that period. They could not completely hide their losses. If that does not suffice the court proceedings of our trial can also bear witness. A white captain of the Rhodesia Special Air Service, who claimed to have fought in Malaysia, was on crutches when he came to give evidence in court. He praised our group.

An African Sergeant-major who was also on crutches said the operation against us was the first in which they sustained such heavy losses out of all the operations in which he took part in Rhodesia. It was also mentioned that a senior white officer, whose rank was not stated, was lying in hospital paralysed. Elsewhere a white officer giving evidence in court was interrupted several times by the Attorney General because some of his statements were "damaging to the army". The judge ordered pressmen not to report them. He said he was not ashamed to say he ran away and was proud at least he did not leave his rifle behind like some of his colleagues did.

Back to the main story. During our last battle (some seven or ten days later) Bothwell was shot in the head twice. Fortunately both were flesh wounds. We dug for him a fox-hole, put him in it and covered it with his clothes, branches and sand, leaving a small opening for breathing. We continued fighting but were ultimately overpowered by the enemy. By then only seven of us were remaining, five ZAPU comrades, myself and Bothwell. The six of us were captured and did not expose Bothwell where we had hidden him because we thought he still had a chance of surviving and find his way out.

One of the military helicopters that were transporting us flew back to the spot (probably to fetch the Rhodesian soldiers that were remaining) and landed 20 meters from Bothwell's hiding place. The strong wind from the helicopter's propeller removed the sand on top of him and it was in that way he was discovered and captured.

We were both sentenced to death, a sentence commuted to life eventually, and we were released in 1980 when Zimbabwe became independent.