



# the General's Voice

TIM LUKIN SHELLHOLE NEWSLETTER



No: 2026-05

*Help your children to have all the things you couldn't afford.  
Then move in with them. That'll teach them!*  
Phyllis Diller

## **JUNE 2026**

### **From the General's Desk**

Tim Lukin Shellhole welcomed a strong turnout, with 36 Moths on parade, 8 visitors, 6 apologies and 5 on sick parade.

### **Election of the Old Bill**

The floor proceeded to the election of the Old Bill for the 2026/2027 term. The Old Bill confirmed that 40 members were present and eligible to vote, joined by 2 authorised proxy votes, bringing the total available votes to 42. A secret ballot was held, with the following result:

Colin Byrne            25 votes

Vincent Marino      14 votes

Abstentions          2

**Total votes cast: 41**

A discrepancy of one vote was noted between the 42 votes available and the 41 cast. The Old Bill explained that this was simply due to one member not casting their vote, and the floor agreed this had no bearing on the final result. Colin Byrne was duly re-elected as the Old Bill, and the Shellhole congratulates him on his re-election.

### **Top Table Voted in Unopposed**

The following members stood unopposed and were voted onto the Top Table by acclamation:

Deputy Old Bill      Kevin Fenton

Adjutant             Zhan-Pere Weinmann

Pay Bill               Hayley Fourie

### **Tim Lukin Shellhole Executive, 2026/2027**

Old Bill                Colin Byrne

Deputy Old Bill      Kevin Fenton

Adjutant             Zhan-Pere Weinmann

Pay Bill               Hayley Fourie

The Shellhole extends its thanks and best wishes to the new Top Table for the year ahead.

### **District Executive Confirmed**

Tim Lukin voted unanimously to retain the current District Executive for the coming term:

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Old Bill        | Wessie Wessels |
| Deputy Old Bill | Douglas Hayes  |
| Adjutant        | Vincent Marino |
| Pay Bill        | Rob Randall    |

Congratulations to all who stand at the helm; the Shellhole stands ready for another good year.

### ***THE CONSTABLE WHO DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE'D FOUND***

*This month, we conclude Moth Athol's account of his years in the BSAP — a career that took him across Rhodesia during some of its most turbulent decades, and transitioned into Zimbabwe during the uneasy calm that followed independence.*

*Parts Five and Six picked up where we left off: a brand-new constable, barely a week into his first rural posting, boards a bus in full uniform, strikes up a conversation with a stranger, and through nothing more than sharp eyes and sharper instincts sets in motion a remarkable discovery.*

*Parts Seven and Eight, which appear in this edition, are the final chapters of Athol's BSAP story. We are grateful to Moth Athol for sharing these memories with such candour and detail throughout this series.*

*Moth Athol Estment served as Officer in Charge, ZRP Filabusi, from late 1980 to late 1981.*

### ***PART SEVEN: INTO THE MEALIE FIELDS***

I had been stuck behind a desk doing administration for too long. I decided I would go along. Before we set off, I made sure Constable Dube added leg irons to the already-cuffed prisoner. My reasoning was not abstract — at my previous posting in Nkai, I had dealt with considerable drama involving a dissident arrested for bus robberies, and I wasn't inclined to take chances.

We followed the accused's directions to Silalachani, and eventually the road ran out. We got out



and walked, the prisoner out front, through a stretch of bush and then through mealie fields — maize crops that had been planted in the heavy red soil. Then we came to a field where nothing had been planted at all.

The man stopped. He looked at the ground and said: 'It is here.'

His handcuffs were removed and he was handed a spade. He dug into the soft earth,

perhaps twenty centimetres down, and the spade struck something solid. I ordered all the constables back and told the prisoner to clear the soil by hand. What emerged was a green wooden box. More digging to the side revealed a second green wooden box alongside it. I stopped the excavation there, radioed Filabusi to send a sergeant and four armed constables to stand guard, and we returned to the station.

Radio contact between Silalachani and the District Police headquarters in Gwanda — under Chief Superintendent Ray Allen — was not possible from the site. Once back at Filabusi, I made my report. The instruction from Dispol was unambiguous: stand back. This was no longer a routine police matter.

### ***PART EIGHT: WHAT THE ENGINEERS DUG UP***

The following morning, a delegation arrived from the Central Intelligence Organisation in Gwanda, accompanied by military engineers. We all went back to Silalachani together. What the engineers uncovered over the course of that day remains, even now, extraordinary.

The arms cache was enormous. There were AK-47 rifles — twelve thousand of them, still in their original factory boxes, never fired. There were landmines, anti-personnel mines, RPG rockets and launchers. Eight army RL trucks were recovered from the site. A Police Armourer from Bulawayo, Inspector Peter South, identified one SAM-7 man-portable surface-to-air missile launcher — though I do not recall seeing the associated missiles. Two of the cells at Filabusi Police Station were used to hold the recovered weapons before they were transported to Bulawayo.

And then there was the Gatling gun.

I have thought about that particular item many times over the decades. A Gatling gun — a hand-cranked, multi-barrelled weapon from the late nineteenth century — has no obvious place in a ZIPRA cache of Soviet-supplied Cold War-era weaponry. My best explanation, and I believe it to be the correct one, is this: the cache was in Silalachani, not far from Lupane, the area through



*Silalachani Arms Cache –  
12,000 AK-47s, RPGs,  
and the Mysterious Gatling Gun*

which ZIPRA fighters typically passed after training in Zambia. Lupane is also near the site of the Shangani Patrol ambush of 1893, where a small Rhodesian column under Major Allan Wilson was destroyed by Matabele forces during the First Matabele War. That battle, and the weapons associated with the era, would not have been forgotten by the people who lived near the Shangani River. It is my belief that local elders in Lupane had kept a Gatling gun concealed since the Matabele Rebellion of 1896 — nearly ninety years — and that when ZIPRA fighters passed through during the liberation war, the weapon was handed over as a gesture of solidarity and support.

Rex Nhongo — then the Commander of ZANLA forces and later known as Solomon Mujuru, who would become one of the most powerful military figures in Zimbabwe — was also on site that day. He arrived by light aircraft. I was not paying close enough attention when he alighted, and I failed to salute him. He had some stern words for me about it. I cannot say he was wrong.

Two of the cells at Filabusi were used to hold the recovered arsenal before transport to Bulawayo. For a rural police station in Matabeleland, it was a surreal few days.

### Thrift Shop & 'FUN'draising for Animal Welfare

Supporting animal rescue organisations  
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ON THE WINGS OF A SPARROW

NPC  
2025/368391/08

EST.  
2025

Thrift shop &  
FUNdraising

For historical context: in 1982, Robert Mugabe moved against Joshua Nkomo, accusing him of plotting a coup and citing, among other things, the discovery of arms caches on ZAPU-linked properties. Whether the Silalachani cache — found a year earlier — fed into that political narrative, I cannot say. What I do know is that a brand-new constable, barely a week into his first posting, boarded a bus in uniform, noticed a can of engine oil, and through sheer instinct made an arrest that led to one of the largest weapons finds in post-independence Zimbabwe.

He didn't know what the man had done. But he knew he'd done something.  
*All pictures in this story are AI generated.*

**Moth Athol Estment served as Officer in Charge, ZRP Filabusi, from late 1980 to late 1981.**

**BIRTHDAYS — JUNE 2026**

**Happy Birthday to our Moths:**

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 🕒 David Christian Harris | 01 <sup>st</sup> June |
| 🕒 Dennis Barry           | 19 <sup>th</sup> June |
| 🕒 Glynnis Herbst         | 21 <sup>st</sup> June |
| 🕒 Clive Coulson          | 28 <sup>th</sup> June |
| 🕒 Kira Sparrow           | 30 <sup>th</sup> June |



🍷 **Cheers to all — and thank you for keeping the spirit of MOTH alive and thriving!**

**JOIN THE MOTHS - WE NEED YOU!**

Ever wondered what happens behind those Shellhole doors? It's not all parades and poppies, there's plenty of laughter, friendship, shared stories, and good-hearted banter too!

Whether you're a veteran or simply someone who values camaraderie, service, and remembrance, you'll find a warm welcome in the MOTHS. We're always looking for good people who believe in *True Comradeship, Mutual Help, and Sound Memory*. These are the values that hold our Order together.

**Curious? Come see for yourself**

If you'd like to learn more or attend a meeting, reach out to your local Shellhole for details.

**For information on how to join TIM LUKIN MOTH Shellhole  
Contact: Deputy Old Bill Jose: 082-561-2990**

## ***In Closing...***

### ***Red Sock Day — A Tribute in Scarlet***

#### ***Red Sock Day***

The story of Red Sock Day begins in the darkness of an Italian prisoner-of-war camp during the Second World War. Sidney Feinson, a South African soldier held at Campo Laterena, made a quiet but heartfelt vow to two fellow POWs: if they survived the war, he would wear red socks every Friday to remember what had happened at Tobruk.

#### ***The fall of Tobruk***

The fall of Tobruk on 21 June 1942 had been catastrophic for South African forces. Major-General H B Klopper surrendered to Rommel with some 32 000 men, among them 10 722 South Africans of the 2nd Division, one of the largest single capitulations suffered by Allied forces in the entire North African campaign. For those men, Tobruk was not merely a military defeat; it was a defining and searing shared experience.

Feinson and his comrades, among them Dick Osborne, Jock Lobban, and Butch Kilpatrick eventually seized the opportunity to escape when Italy surrendered in the autumn of 1943 and the men faced transfer to a camp deep inside Germany. Each man leapt from the moving train into the dark, committing himself to his own fate. Whether all of them honoured the red sock pact after the war is not recorded. But the promise itself survived.



Decades later, a young South African named John McNroy came upon the story of Feinson's vow. Moved by it, he and a friend began wearing red socks on Fridays as a mark of friendship and remembrance. The idea spread quietly but steadily, brightened, in McNroy's own words, by the economic hardships of the time, until it became a broader South African tradition.

Red Sock Friday grew from that personal tribute into a grassroots movement embracing camaraderie, the celebration of life, and solidarity with those who served. In the veterans' community, it took on particular significance. The wearing of red socks on Fridays as a memorial gesture to the fallen has since been endorsed by both the South African Legion and the Memorable Order of Tin Hats (MOTH) — two of the country's foremost veterans' organisations, giving the tradition an official place within the culture of military remembrance.

Today, Red Sock Day is observed on Fridays across South Africa. For civilians, it is an expression of unity and good cheer. For veterans and their families, it carries the deeper resonance of its origins: a promise made in a prison camp by men who did not know whether they would live or die, that if they survived, they would remember.

It is a small gesture. It costs little. But in that flash of red, there lives the memory of Tobruk, of the men who fell, and of those who came home and kept their word.

Sources: [South African History Online](#) | [Runnersguide](#) | [The South African Military History Society](#)

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## USEFUL & INTERESTING LINKS

Visit M.O.T.H. Home Page

MOTH Beginnings

Tim Lukin Shellhole Facebook Page

Tim Lukin Shellhole Official Page

MMA's Facebook Page

MOTH Membership – Do you Qualify?

Warrior's Gate Virtual Tour

Military Veteran Websites to Visit

East Rand District Dugout

Platinum Provincial Dugout

MOTHWA Home Page

Moth Roll Of Honour

Become a Shellhole Supporter

## GUEST SPEAKERS WANTED FOR 2026

**(WARNING: AUDIENCE MAY LAUGH, LEARN, OR CRY)**

Got a story worth sharing?

Do you have knowledge that's fascinating, unusual, or surprisingly useful?

Can you capture an audience's attention for 20–30 minutes (in the best possible way)?

**Tim Lukin Shellhole** is looking for engaging guest speakers to help make our 2026 meetings lively, interesting, and memorable.

You can speak about military history, unique experiences, or specialised knowledge we didn't even know we needed, we'd love to hear from you.



***Step Up! Don't be shy! The floor is yours, and we'll be all ears.  
Interested? Contact Moth Martin on 084-371-8120.***

**TIM LUKIN'S  
ROCKY HORROR  
EVENING**  
*One Night Only*

**GIVE YOURSELF OVER  
TO ABSOLUTE PLEASURE**

**Venue:** Edenvale Bowling Club  
**Address:** 172 6th Avenue, Edenvale  
**Date:** 27-June 2026  
**Time:** 6pm for 6:30  
**Dress:** Rocky Horror Theme  
**Cost:** R180/person **(Includes Meal & Music)**  
*(Payment secures your place. No tickets sold at the door)*  
**Contact: Veronica: 071-339-0162  
Jean: 083-442-3771**

## TIM LUKIN'S THE ROCKY HORROR EVENING.

Come on over to Tim Lukin's Rock Horror Evening!

**GIVE YOURSELF OVER TO ABSOLUTE PLEASURE,  
A NIGHT OF DARK DELIGHTS BEYOND ALL MEASURE.**

**PULL ON YOUR FISHNETS, YOUR CAPE, AND YOUR TIGHTS  
COME, LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN TONIGHT!**

**SO DRESS TO THRILL AND JOIN OUR CELEBRATION!  
I SEE YOU SHIVER WITH ANTICI.....PATION!**

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**(Includes Dinner & Dance. Music by Mark G)**

**Payment secures your place**

**(NO TICKETS SOLD AT THE DOOR)**

**For Tickets Contact Veronica: 071-339-0162**

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