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TRANSCRIPTION

Speaker	Dialogue
MN	<p>This is an interview with Retired Colonel Richard Dube, also known as Geddi, who has agreed to be interviewed as part of the Zenzo Nkobi Photographic Archive Project, being conducted by Mary Ndlovu and Zephaniah Nkomo on behalf of SAHA and Mafela Trust. This interview is being conducted on November 29th at Bulawayo.</p> <p>Right, can you tell us a little bit about yourself first, how did you come to join the struggle and what was your role that you were playing there?.</p>
RD	<p>Yes, I actually joined the struggle, the ZPR in the year 1968. This was after the numerous activities that were going on in Zimbabwe carried out by ZPR in 1968, 1967 actually, and part of 68, in in Wankie and in Sipolilo in ... in the northern parts of the country. Now, these are the battles in actual fact that inspired me which were carried out by ZPR, in ..</p>



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>the Wankie battle and the Sipolilo battle, so as early as ... early 1968 I decided well, I was going to leave the country and go and join the rest of the fighters who were fighting for the liberation of this country in in in ZPRA.</p> <p>Now, then 1968 end of the year December, that's when I decided to leave the country via Botswana. I had to delay departing Botswana because there were numerous problems behind pertaining to the to the to the party in moving the people to to Zambia. I got to Botswana 1968 December but I was .. I remained in Botswana until March the following year, 1969, when I was flown with the others to to Lusaka. When we got to Lusaka we were transferred of course to a camp called Luthuli and at Luthuli there we were there we were there for well I think about 7 months in Luthuli and then moved over to another camp near the Zambezi Valley where we remained until about September, and from there that's when we moved over to Morogoro for our training in 1969, September. Now when we got to Lusaka, I mean to to Tanzania, in Morogoro for training ... we trained alright, we had our instructors, I can name a few of them ... Alfred Nikita Mangena, Lookout Masuku .. eh Masengo ... what's his name ... by the way now I forget his name ...</p>
ZN	Harold Chirenda
RD	<p>Harold Chirenda .. and well there were quite a good number of them who trained us. But after this training when we were ready in fact to be moved over to to the operational areas, the problems of the formation of FROLIZI had started in Lusaka, so we had to remain in Tanzania for quite a long time, till 1973 when I had to be selected to go and do a further ..further training in military engineering in the Soviet Union. But before we went there we .. we underwent a course .. a few of us underwent a course on instructions. We had to take over as instructors from those who were, who were our instructors. So before before I ... I went to the Soviet Union we had a few cadres who came actually who were ... who became our first lot of men who we instructed in guerrilla training. And then 1973 I had to be chosen for this military engineering course in the Soviet Union. 73 ... I was back 197...after what ... 18 months I think.. got to Lusaka. When I got to Lusaka I was moved back to to Tanzania for military ... I mean to be an instructor in military engineering in Tanzania.</p> <p>So I remained in in .. in Morogoro till 1976 when the camp closed, and when the camp closed I was moved over to .. I moved over to Lusaka. In Lusaka I ...we had to go and open a new... a new camp CGT1 in in in the southern province of the country. We trained the first big group of men ... men and women who came for training. After this group of 1977 which included the Manama ... the Manama children ... you remember the Manama</p>



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>children¹. After we had trained them the command decided to shift me over to to Mulungushi to go and command the regular battalions that were were undergoing training there. I moved over to Mulungushi, continued in Mulungushi till the end of the training in Mulungushi. I forgot ... I forget when it ended actually. But at the end of the military training at Mulungushi I was moved over to Lusaka where I became the deputy commissar of ZPRA, and I was also responsible for the work of the operational area CGT2 ...¹ with the now commander of the defence forces of the army, Philip Sibanda, General Philip Sibanda. We were responsible for CGT1 operational area which included some of our battalions, about three battalions which had been trained at Mulungushi.</p>
MN	<p>OK. And where was that? Geographically where was it?</p>
RD	<p>It's in the southern part of Lusaka, south of Choma, Kabanga area, in the Kabanga area, yah. So we we we remained there for for for quite some time with Phillip Sibanda. Now this area Kabanga is also the area where the commander ... our commander Mangena died, Alfred Nikita died. In actual fact when he ... the the day Alfred Nikita died I ... I was in his company.</p>
MN	<p>Oh, you were?</p>
RD	<p>Yah, I was. I was in his company, yes.</p>
MN	<p>OK. Maybe we should talk about that incident first, should we? The ..there is a photograph here, of one of the men who also was there. Maybe you could just describe the ... what happened.[3B-08-07]</p>
RD	<p>Actually what happened was ...there are so many stories now being told about how Mangena died...which is all ...the majority of them are not true stories. What actually happened was ... before Mangena died there was a group of men who came from ... I think from Angola who were .. who were who were to be deployed in the what you call it ... in the zone by a commander called Asaf...the zonal commander called Asaf. Now these cadres who had just come from Angola were taken to the front by by by Comrade Asaf in in vehicles. Now as they got to an area close to Kabanga Mission... It's a place after Kabanga Mission ... they were ambushed by what you call it the Rhodesian the Rhodesian Selous Selous Scouts. ... the Rhodesian soldiers who had been placed there to go and ambush them. Quite a great number of them were killed including the commander Asaf. Now after... after they had been killed it was then realized that the area was so difficult due to the infiltration of the Rhodesian forces in the area, so the commander Alfred Mangena</p>

¹ Children from Manama Secondary School in Gwanda South, who were taken across to Botswana by guerrillas in January 1977. The majority proceeded to military training and others for further education.



Speaker	Dialogue
	<p>decided he was going to go there personally and and and make an assessment and and do a bit of supervision of the of the what you call it of the operations in the area, because the the area had become very, well very difficult to to ... I mean to to to penetrate due to the numerous Rhodesian raids that were carried in the area ... that were being carried in the area. So Alfred Mangena planned his own mission. He called us, the what you call the the commanders who were ... who were responsible for the area and the commanders at army headquarters, the [inaudible] ... in fact I can call them what you call the senior commanders at army headquarters ... he selected a few to accompany him. He selected the chief of staff, that was Gervan Maseko who was also responsible for for the operations that time. Gervan Maseko, what did they call him...</p>
ZN	Market Ndebele
RD	<p>Market Ndebele, yes we used to call him Jack but his actual name was Market Ndebele, he was a deputy, a third deputy in operations. There was Cassius Sigoge Mlotshwa, he was a chief of training ...there was myself, a deputy in in .. in the commissariat, the sectoral ... the zonal commander actually Phillip Sibanda was in in in the area at that time. We were going to meet him in the area, when we got there. Now...</p>
MN	So you were all travelling in one vehicle.
RD	<p>No, no, we were in several vehicles, we were in several vehicles. We left Lusaka via Choma and then into Kabanga. Just after when .. after Kabanga the commander decided I was supposed to remain behind and establish a what you call it a a a ... an administrative base. So I remained behind with about a platoon of men to establish an administrative base whilst he moved further down to the area where the ... these guys had been killed. I remained in the area, established the the base. We were there the whole day, we were there the whole day he ... had when he was further down in the operational area himself with the other commanders and the troops. Now, after he had done what he wanted to do, he decided to ... they were on their way back actually. As they were on their way back, at the point where I established my my my administrative base we had been instructed and he had been instructed also by a commander who was in the area at that deputy operation called Donkey.. Donkey [inaudible] ... he had instructed him that no vehicle was supposed to cross a river that separated my base with the area where they had gone into, because the area was very dangerous. Now, but as he was coming back at about 3 am in the morning.... you remember Mangena was once involved in a shoot out at the .. I mean at the headquarters where he got shot on the leg...as he was coming back he started feeling pains on the on the ... what do you call it... his leg started giving problems and then he decided to phone me and tell me that he needed the what you call it the ... the vehicle to come and pick him.</p>



Speaker	Dialogue
MN	Oh, they were on foot.
RD	Yes, they were on foot, they were on foot. So I ... I had no options, because I was under command actually I had to order the what you call it .. the driver Bhalo to take the vehicles and meet ... and meet the commander. That time they were just about a kilometre or so away from from .. from the base where I was now ... He drove alright, got there, when he got there, Mangena, I mean Gervan and Mangena , Market Ndebele, Sigoge, and well of course the bodyguards got into the same vehicle with Mangena, in fact it was the only vehicle. They got into the vehicle In the vehicle Gervan was seated in the middle and Mangena was seated at the what you call it at the side and of course this other side had the driver. Now ... then the vehicle ... when the vehicle moved in fact the vehicle started moving, moving towards where they were coming from but it had to turn of course to to go back where it came from. Now as it turned, going back where it came from it stepped on a landmine and ... that is when Mangena was was killed by the what you call it by the landmine. The others ... Gervan, was stunned, he wasn't killed of course he was stunned by the landmine. Jack wasn't ... no in fact I made a mistake ... Jack wasn't in the vehicle when he got shot on the leg, he was outside the vehicle but there was firing from from the eastern side of the what you call it of the road which which got him on the leg.
MN	So it was like an ambush.
RD	It was an ambush sort of, yes and Gervan was... Mangena was killed, Gervan was well he was out of course, Bhalo the driver was also unconscious, Sigoge the same thing. So everyone was almost unconscious, but Mangena himself was was killed in the what you call it, in that mine blast. I think what actually killed him was the ... when the vehicle was ... when when the mine detonated he was pushed straight into the panel of the what you call of of the window then it it cracked his skulls I mean his... I wouldn't say the skull got cracked, the skull didn't crack, in fact the brain was, he got some internal brain injuries I think, that is what would have killed him. So being at the operational ... at the what you call it at the admin base I had to move into the area of the blast immediately to investigate
MN	You heard it. Did you hear it?
RD	Yes it was about a kilometer away.. to investigate and then rescue if there was any need to rescue the what you call it ... the men who were involved. Now as I moved into the area, just before I got onto ... at the spot I met a few men carrying Mangena's body. He was already dead. I ordered them to move him quickly outside the the the spot so that if ever there was any any enemy soldier in the area they were not going to be able to do what ... to just get hold of the body so easily. I ordered them to move it out and guard the body there very strongly so that no no enemy should ever get hold of the body. Now it was



Speaker	Dialogue
	about ... well almost about sunrise ... just at about that time the Rhodesian helicopters were scouring the area looking for for us, but I did manage to secure the body of Alfred Nikita until the word got into Zambia ... into Lusaka and somehow or other the Zambian army maneuvered into the area and took the body to Lusaka. I personally remained behind burying the dead ... we had three dead men, bodyguards of of Alfred, I mean of Alfred Nikita. Well, I had to remain there burying them obviously, but I managed to have the rest ...those who were injured Market Ndebele, Sigoge , Bhala, Gervan and then the others plus the body taken over to Lusaka. They arrived there safely.
MN	And then these other photographs here are showing part of the funeral. [3B-32-12] and 3B-32-13]
RD	Yes, that is Mangena's funeral. I wasn't I wasn't at the funeral when when he was buried I remained there co-ordinating I mean supervising the soldiers there supervising the operations till till after the burial
MN	Can you just tell us who's here, why is it being led like this.
RD	In this picture This is this is the commander who took over from Mangena, Lookout Masuku and
MN	This one ... this must have been taken just after this photograph
RD	The person who is very clear here is is Lookout.
MN	Lookout, yes. And here, can you tell us where it is
RD	Well it should be some place where well this could have been at the Leopard's Hill or Zimbabwe House, it could have been there actually. I'm not sure because I was not there, but this must have been at Zimbabwe House
MN	I think this is Zimbabwe House
RD	Here it must have been at leopard's Hill perhaps, yah, this must have been at Leopard's Hill, here at Zimbabwe House
MN	Here it must have been when they just arrived at Leopard's Hill. Can you say something about the significance of the death of Mangena... What did it mean for ZPRA and for ZAPU?
RD	Well the significance of the death of Mangena, well is varied according to a lot of people but we the authentic fighters at that time, we say Mangena ... when Mangena died we we lost a real commander .. we lost a real commander, a man who ... well we ...we often wonder what could have happened had he survived and had he lived until independence. Alfred Mangena was a commander who ... who knew how to plan for his soldiers. He was a man who actually commanded his soldiers. He didn't want to be only a commander in the



Speaker	Dialogue
	office. This is why he moved over to the field himself to go and make a personal assessment of the problems that were facing his own men. That was the kind of a commander we had. In fact I must say when Mangena died we all felt a real loss of a man who was going to command us to to definite victory yes, but however ... well, we knew that the man who was always at at at his back Lookout Masuku was going to to to equally be effective when he took over the command of the what you call it of ZPRA
MN	Was there not any talk that there was an assassination from within. Was there no did it not cause any divisions in that sense within ZAPU or within the army
RD	No, not within the army There was no division that I knew of, but there was talk of ... some people of course well were heard to be talking about Mangena was assassinated Mangena was killed by by some some some of his soldiers, some of his soldiers, this is ... this talk ... this talk was there but it wasn't really pronounced, yah, but there were some people who used to talk like that.
MN	Well especially after the Chitepo thing had been not so long before ... and and it followed on JZ as well. O.K. then so Mangena was buried in Lusaka.
RD	He was buried in Lusaka, but his his his body was later removed and brought to the Heroes Acre here in Zimbabwe after independence
MN	Let's go to this lot which we think were taken inside Zimbabwe during operations. Can you explain to us what is going on here in this photograph with the women and the guerrilla there. [1D-46-02]
RD	Obviously somebody's explaining about the ANC of Muzorewa ... it's one of the guerrillas, I don't know who this man was. He must have been explaining about...what was it called UNC. ...UANC
MN	I think It was ANC then. Later it became the UANC
RD	It was ANC that time yes he must have been explaining about the ANC ... what the ANC was all about. This looks like a pamphlet about the ANC of Muzorewa. Perhaps this guerilla was telling these people that they must not be detracted by the ... the antics of Muzorewa's ANC in trying to to douse the
MN	If we go...we should have zoomed in. This has actually got Nkomo in the middle. [studying the photo] But was this kind of session where they talked to the people about the political situation, was that common?
RD	Ya, it was common yes, very common
MN	They would gather the people
RD	But you know the the reason why for instance Nkomo is there... Nkomo was even used by



Speaker	Dialogue
	the enemies his own enemies to to to [inaudible] the people ² . This was perhaps what this person was was explaining. That the use of the picture of Joshua Nkomo here is to [inaudible] them. I'm not exactly sure what was actually written on the pamphlet, but it is for the ANC and the ANC at that time at this time was already in real collusion ... I mean it was really in collusion with the with what you call it the Rhodesian regime, the Ian Smith regime in Zimbabwe here. They were the what you call ... Muzorewa was the was the Prime Minister then
MN	In... after 78
RD	Yes
MN	We thought maybe this one was a little earlier than that, before the Internal settlement
RD	Oh, you think it was before. It could have been before but even if it was before Muzorewa had shown the ... what you call ...he had shown the ambition to become the leader of this country as early ...far earlier than the independence of this country. Yah. So this picture was taken of course in the operational areas. But the person who was .. who is in the picture here must have been telling the people that they must be very careful about the ANC of Muzorewa. The guerrillas of course knew that the ANC was the baby of Joshua Nkomo but having been ... having known that it was the baby of Joshua Nkomo they had also become aware that Muzorewa had become too ambitious to assume thewhat you call the mantle of leadership of Zimbabwe, well
ZN	Probably tell us how such gatherings were organized
RD	Well, guerrillas operated within the masses with the .. the mujiba network one could could have millions of people from as far as maybe 30, 40, 50 kilometres away, so a small gathering like this wasn't a problem to to to amass.
MN	And they would do it like that in the daylight.
RD	Yes in the daylight yes. You know, doing this in the daylight was so easy because of the mujiba network. You know, when the mujiba network ... if in operations you could know where this ... I mean being here, let's say you are situated here, the mujibas would know exactly what is happening in Gwanda, would know exactly what is happening in Matopo, in ... in as far as le'ts say Shangani or as far as Lupane they would know definitely that in in Lupane today the ... there is a unit of what you call of soldiers doing this and that and that, moving in this direction, in that direction, in Gwanda the the unit of soldiers ... there's such a unit of soldiers doing this and that moving towards this direction and so on and so forth...

² Specific words are difficult to decipher here, but the suggestion is that Muzorewa was claiming to be still working with Nkomo at a time when he no longer was, thus trying to deceive people into supporting him. Political education by guerrillas had to counter this trend.



Speaker	Dialogue
	so making a gathering of this nature in the operational areas it wasn't a problem because of the mujiba network
MN	O.K. So they'd be able to say there's no troops around it's o.k.
RD	There are no troops around today. If ever there are troops the troops would be at such and such a place not in such and such a place.
MN	O.K.
ZN	Is it from that kind of strategy that could not expose these people to any dangers as compared to....
RD	Exactly, yes, exactly yes
MN	And this other photograph. Was this common for the guerrillas to be fed by the local people? [1D-63-04]
RD	It was very common in fact it was a daily thing to be fed by the locals because guerrillas could not carry food all the time. The source of feeding was ... were the masses. But this picture also indicates that even if these women came to feed these guerrillas they they came with their babies. It indicates that they were very aware of the fact that there were no soldiers within the area. Otherwise they would not have allowed the women to bring in their what you call, their babies ... the mujiba network I think was very much active in this situation. For this situation to take place.
MN	So they wouldn't go to eat in the village. They would be ... they would stay outside the village and have the food brought to them
RD	Exactly, yes, because going in the village it exposed them to the ... what you call it ... to the to to to ... what do you call them the ... it exposed them to, it exposed them to the people who were sent to to...
MN	To the informers?
RD	Yes, it exposed them to the informers. This is what I'm trying to say. It exposed them to the informers, because whatever we did we were always aware that there could be informers amongst the people. Nobody could trust ... what you call ... the civilian population totally. So it was necessary that whenever this kind of feeding was to take place it was to take place away from the ...the eyes of the ... of the what you call it ... of the civilians, because within the civilians there could be informers.
MN	What type of a weapons would these be that the men were holding?
RD	This is an AK. This is what ... this must be a light machine gun maybe
ZN	It's just a light machine gun



Speaker	Dialogue
RD	Yes, it's just a light machine gun.
MN	What's the difference between an AK and a light machine gun?
RD	The the the light machine gun is bigger.
MN	It's bigger
RD	Yes
ZN	We look at this one where you see guerrillas escorting the women in a formation. [1D-73-24] What is this [inaudible]
RD	Are they escorting them? [inaudible discussion] Perhaps they were not sure of what what what lay ahead. This is why they had to take such a formation escorting them away from where they were
MN	How is the formation what ... what
RD	It's ...there is this man here and this one here and this one there and these are the women here. What I'm saying is the possibility that they were not very ... perhaps they were not very certain about what lay ahead so they wanted to make sure that where they, they left these women it was safe so they had to escort them to to that point
MN	And when, when ... when they moved through the bush like this, did they move in specific formation I mean even if they had nobody to escort.
RD	They moved in specific formations because ...
MN	They didn't go in single file?
RD	No no, there were specific formations because during ...in the operational areas, the enemy was everywhere. There was no time to think that there was no enemy, even if you were ... had been informed that the enemy's so many kilometers away but you took it also to mean that the enemy was just there, close, that you could come into contact any time
MN	So was this a way of ...sort of a way of spreading out so you were not all bunched together.
RD	We were spreading out so we were not all bunched together; in fact the formation, the operational formation.... well I mean different from ... What used to happen in the camps in Zambia during those days when the Smith ... the Smith regime was bombing... during that time when the Smith regime was bombing the camps in Zambia ... what we used to do ... each morning we would ... the commander would evacuate the base, or the camp, move the people maybe some ten kilometers north, others south, others east so that the camp remained an an empty space vacant and empty of people. Even if ... when the camp was empty even if the enemy came it would just bomb the camp and the people would be safe far as far away from the centre of the camp, now. That was in the bases that one, but in



Speaker	Dialogue
	the operational areas when when the men went they were in a definite formation to react immediately and when they moved out of the camp they were in a definite formation. to combat the enemy immediately. This ... that was the difference
MN	O.K. How many ... how many men would be travelling together in a unit?
RD	Well it depended, it depended on whether it was a a ...a section or a platoon or a company or whatever.
MN	But was it usually just a small number together?
RD	Well sometimes, yes, they were small numbers but at times there were big numbers, depending on what they actually intended to go and and do for their operations.
MN	Hm. So it would vary a lot
RD	Yah It would vary yes
MN	Shall we go to this this one [3A-20-07]
RD	Well that one is Nkomo at Mulungushi camp
MN	This is at Mulungushi, O.K
RD	He was coming to review his soldiers
MN	You said you were, you were at Mulungushi. What was happening at that camp?
RD	We were training the regular soldiers for the turning point ... for the turning point
MN	O.K. Before we go to the turning point, let's just see who was here with Nkomo.

RD	This is Joshua Nkomo, this is the commander Mangena,
MN	O.K. So this was before he was killed
RD	I don't know who this one is Maseko
MN	And would this be a Zambian army person?
RD	No this, no this this this in actual fact I'm not ... I don't think this ... it was not Mulungushi It must have been somewhere where there was Maseko, I don't know where this was
ZN	Could it be a visit in the operational area
RD	It's a visit somewhere
ZN	... where the Zambians had taken escort to, because if it were Mulungushi they would have made it by road.
RD	If it were Mulungushi I would be appearing somewhere here, but this is ...
MN	Oh They've come in by helicopter
RD	They've come in by helicopter. But you know where the difficulty is with these ... these what you call ... these pictures. The commander would decide, simply decide where to to



	to have the soldiers assembled so that they would ..Nkomo would meet them
MN	So it might not have been at a specific camp
RD	It might ...this wasn't a specific camp, it must have been just a spot somewhere where they were met by the commander in chief
MN	Was this a normal ... this seems to be a parade where he's appearing before them
RD	This must have been a camp. It's a parade yes
MN	Now are these some of the regular soldiers that were being trained for conventional warfare or they ... or guerrillas?
RD	No these were guerrillas These were guerrillas. At a training camp ... it's either in Mwembeshi or CGT camps... it could have been Mwembeshi or CGT camps or any other camp. It could have been ... this must have been a training camp, either CGT or Mwembeshi or any other camp. [inaudible discussion]
MN	How many would you have had together in one camp like that.
RD	Oh two two two thousand or so
MN	That many? And what do you think Nkomo would be saying to them?
RD	Usually the message that he passed to the men was that especially when they they are through with their training "Comrades you are through with your training, the enemy is across the river. It is you to liberate your country, it is you to liberate that country" because just as ... as it was at that time the the the enemy was always afraid of the what you call it of the of the of the operations especially by ZPRA . I believe in a .. in a what you call it ... in a parade of this kind this is exactly what he could say that "the enemy is afraid of you; get home and fight the enemy"
MN	And how would the men respond then when they saw Nkomo there
RD	Very enthusiastically that was usually the welcome, the reaction of the comrades. Nkomo was always accepted whenever he went, enthusiastically accepted, welcomed by the cadres
MN	Let's come to this one now, the turning point. [3B-14-18] Can you explain what the turning point was
RD	The turning point was... pertaining the use of the what you call it of the of the regulars. This is why we had to train the five battalions at Mulungushi. Now
ZN	Close to ten thousand
RD	Close to ten thousand. Now, the turning point was a result of the fact that in the country here, especially in Matabeleland North we had semi-liberated zones. I can give you my experience of the semi-liberated zones we had. I was one time assigned to come and make an assessment inside in NF 2 which includes... Hwange. Lupane, part of Nkayi, Tsholotsho up to to Plumtree. I left Zambia of course with a group of men; we walked through through through Hwange up to Lupane, walked up to to Nkayi, walked through up to through Tsholotsho and then Plumtree and finally I was ... I crossed over to Botswana. Now, you can be surprised that during my movements around this country at certain places



	I could ride on a bike during the day along the roads ..
MN	With your weapon on your back?
RD	With my weapon on my back
MN	And were you were you in uniform?
RD	Yes, in uniform that is the the the March we had dealt a blow to the enemy. We we had semi-liberated zones, especially around Lupane and so on and so on. We had semi-liberated zones. Now the idea of the what you call it of the Turning Point was - we had reached a point where we wanted to capture land and defend it and ... how we were going to do that without regular soldiers. This is what necessitated us to to train five battalions initially which we were going to use the armaments of course that our Russian friends had already given us, the tanks, the amphibious I mean the pontoons and so on which we were going to use for
MN	You were going to bring the tanks on pontoons.
RD	Yes we were going to bring the tanks on pontoons. We we we were really amassing the arsenal to to to move in the regular battalions and defend the areas ... the liberated areas
MN	OK So you were going to bring this weaponry, this weaponry these armaments across into the country
RD	Yes the the the battalions were going to bring in their weapons and then capture the ... what you call the ... capture the ground
MN	So you also had anti-aircraft?
RD	We had everything we had ... we had men also training as pilots in the Soviet Union.
MN	But you didn't have planes
RD	Well we didn't have planes but we perhaps we were going to be given
MN	You were going to get them. O.K. and then, what happened then because this is April 79
RD	Then then then the the what you call it ... this plan was overtaken by the ceasefire after the Lancaster, at Lancaster after Lancaster House what you call it ... talks
MN	Do you think the British and the Rhodesians knew about this plan and that pushed them to talk.
RD	They knew. In Kabanga where Mangena got killed we had three battalions. I and Philip Sibanda, General Sibanda now, we were supervising to defend the the area before their actual deployment inside the country. We we we had three battalions. We had really armed them we had armed them to when you say you armed something you say ... but to his teeth something ... but we had armed them that much. I will ... I will tell you what the regime had decided ... I mean had tried ... when our ... those battalions were there. General Schute - when he was Brigadier actually - in One Brigade here in Bulawayo ... he is the one who was responsible for that area. He sent his what you call his MIO's his intelligence group about three times going there to to make reconnaissance and so on. Each time they came back they thought they had come to the final what what the point where they would decide to go and attack but all the three times they made



	reconnaissance and came down here and assessed what they had discovered they aborted the what ... the decisions to go and attack those battalions. Because they had been properly trained and properly armed. So three times they wanted to attack those battalions they aborted those ... what you call ... three times. This was ...
MN	What were they afraid of?
RD	They were afraid of of of the strength of the battalions.
MN	In terms of weaponry?
RD	In terms of weaponry and training
MN	OK
RD	They had already tested that when they ... they attacked the battalion at at at Kariba. It was one of, one of the battalions that had been trained at Mulungushi. The battle at Feira it took about it took about almost two weeks. Then they were unable to defeat that battalion and they lost quite a good number of planes and men. So they ... they realized if they could be resisted by a single battalion using all the the equipment they had, all the the special forces they had on one battalion ... they were being resisted by one battalion, how more ... what more with with with three battalions
MN	So do you think this knowledge pushed them to talks?
RD	Yes, definitely. The knowledge that we wanted to capture land pushed them to talks. They knew that we meant business.
MN	But you couldn't use the tanks in Zambia.
RD	No we couldn't use the tanks in Zambia so the whole thing was supposed to .. I mean all this equipment was supposed to be moved into the country. Of course it was going to be difficult to move all the equipment into the country, but we were determined to move all the equipment and the men into the country to come and defend an area which we could then call ours where we could deploy anything, airplanes, and everything that we wanted to deploy.
MN	So do you think that ... so the ceasefire cheated ZPRA out of that victory. Did people think that when ...
RD	I don't know whether ... I must say that, because wars are normally decided on on the table not in battle. We could have won or we could have lost I don't know, but wars are normally decided on the table. But we normally say ... well when looking at the country as it is at the moment ... we normally say the struggle should have continued than to have allowed this kind of rubbish to take place.
ZN	Probably you may give us just a brief account of the the character and caliber of the ZPRA cadre
RD	We had, we had everybody. I cannot talk about one because we had everybody but I must ... I must say the caliber of the ZPRA soldiers - those that truly got trained having left the country and to actually go and fight - became very good soldiers, very trusted soldiers and very fearful soldiers actually, but as I'm saying we had everything, we had Selous Scouts we had detractors, we had cowards, we had all sorts of people, but the majority of our men,



	<p>the ZPRA soldiers, were of such quality that even the enemy was always afraid of going into the operational area where the ZPRAs were operating. This I can personally confirm because after ... after the ceasefire I moved over to take the office of liaison officer here at Brady Barracks. I used to have a lot of discussions with General Schute - at that time Brigadier Schute - I was intelligence officer and so on. But each time we talked about we discussed about ZPRA they would say well, each time they sent out their soldiers to go and confront ZPRA in the areas where ZPRA operations took place, where they operated against ZPRA, they would make sure that they would give a proper goodbye to their families because they were always not very certain whether they would come back or not. But - I must be very frank - they talked ill of the ZANLAs ... they, they wouldn't even say goodbye to their wives when going to operate against ZALAs because as far as they were concerned it was a question of going there and make all the pickings they wanted.</p>
ZN	We have these photographs and these arms. They look like captured weapons.[3B-14-18]
RD	I'm not very certain where this was. It must have been at our headquarters, because outside the headquarters I don't foresee this kind of a thing.
MN	This was, we believe it was at the Liberation Centre. There was a lot of other people there.
RD	It could have been at the Liberation Centre or at at our headquarters
ZN	But what would have happened? Here we have captured weapons. How are they captured where are they captured.
RD	Captured from the front and taken back into Zambia, taken taken into Zambia from from the front
MN	Would they carry them back to Zambia?
RD	They would
MN	For what purpose?
RD	At times it would be difficult to to to get ammunition for for their friends.
MN	Were these not different weapons though from what they were using.
RD	These were different yes
MN	So ...
RD	So ,... If you are a soldier, let's say if a guerrilla captured a weapon, it would perhaps just be a weapon with only one magazine, so to keep it there for operations it it it would not work because of the limitations in in ammunition.
MN	But they wouldn't want to leave it for the enemy.
RD	No, they wouldn't leave it for the enemy, they wouldn't leave it for the enemy. So the best thing always was to capture these weapons and after some time move them over to to a safe place in the rear.
MN	How would they have captured them, just from killing somebody and then picking it off his body?
RD	Killing somebody, killing somebody
MN	They didn't attack any posts where they would ...



RD	You attack a post and capture the weapons, yah ... attack the post, kill the the what the occupants and capture the weapons and and and all the other valuables. These these these of course were the weapons that were used by the Rhodesian soldiers.
ZN	We don't have the <i>Zimbabwe Review</i> here ... but probably the combat diary that used to give us a lot of diary information of over running police stations
RD	You had combat diaries ... I don't know whether we still have them.
MN	O.K. so what... maybe we could just summarise, wind up by asking you to say what contribution you think ZPRA made to winning independence
RD	<p>Actually, it's immense the contribution of ZPRA to the independence of this country, is immense. Without ZPRA this country wouldn't have been freed or liberated. It's a fact ... it's a fact. Now, we have analysed the operations by ZPRA and the operations by ZANLA. There is nowhere in the ZANLA operational areas where you hear of battles that took place. If there are battles they are fictitious like the Chipolilo³ battle, the Chinhoyi battle they are fictitious battles. There is nobody who can take you to Chipolilo and show you where a battle actually took place and who can actually name the people who participated in that battle, and well you have heard about the the Chinhoyi battle. Now we talk about the battle the Sipilolo battle 1963, we talk of the Wankie battle in 1967. In the ... in the Boer archives, the South African archives, those battles are there, because the ... what you call ... the South Africans participated in that - they know what happened there. Take for instance Wankie, the Wankie battle of 1967 ... do you know that the battle in Wankie almost caused a split between South Africa and the ... and the Rhodesians after the killing of the commander, the South African commander Brandt. He was shot by the guerrillas in Wankie and then the South Africans were at loggerheads with the ... what you call it ... the Rhodesian soldiers that they were cowards because they were sending them in front instead of them going ... going in front to face the what you call it the the guerrillas But well the whole thing was stupid because at that time it was not only the ZPRA guerrillas that were fighting in the Wankie battle, we were together fighting together with the ANC. So whoever went in front he was defending himself, was defending his interest in actual fact. Now we had definite battles like Wankie, the Wankie battle the Silpolilo battle ... the the the shooting of the Viscounts the shooting of ... what you call it ... the destruction of the fuel in Zambia, no in Harare, the the the disappearance of of Coon and his company in in in Wankie. Coon was a South African sergeant, he disappeared for quite some time with his men and he was found dead, having been killed by our ZPRA guerrillas. And all all these ... all these things all these issues are documented and the battle at at at ... our regular battle at Feira it's all there. But you look at ZANLA and ZANLA operations it's all attacks by the ... what you call ... by the Rhodesians ... Chimoyo attacks, what attacks, all attacks ... where were their battles? Now I must say the ZPRA operations were a decisive factor in in the liberation of this ... what you call ... of this country because without ZPRA</p>

³ This place was originally called Sipolilo, but its name was changed after Independence to Chipolilo.

