



## Marshal Smuts Shellhole

P.O.Box 246, Somerset West, 7129  
Cnr. Drama & Swalle Streets, Somerset West, 7130



# BULLSHEET

## April 2011

### EDITORIAL

During March 2011, as is well known we celebrated our 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday. How did we however get to the present facilities? One of the quotes of Moth "O" is:

### Shellhole Calendar

**15 April: General Meeting**  
**18:00**

*Friendship is the greatest power given to man; it turns ideals into practical deeds.* Considering the hard times of the first years of the Shellhole, I am sure it was only friendship and dedication that kept them going to leave us the legacy of the Marshal Smuts Shellhole today. The meetings during the first year were held in the lounge of the Somerset Hotel; thereafter an old bungalow was obtained from the Army. The bungalow was placed next to the premises of Piet van Niekerk's Bicycle Shop in Lourens Street, roughly in the parking lot of the modern day Shoprite building. When he sold his property in the early 1960s, the Shellhole was left without a home. Fortunately they received permission from the All Saints Church of the Province of South Africa situated in Oak Street, Somerset West, to use their hall on Monday nights.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1971, the Somerset West Town Council allotted a piece of ground situated at ERF 11286, with a complete basic building on a 25 year lease to the Shellhole. The Shellhole received the title deed to this property in 1990. Since then it has seen considerable facelifts and surgery of a more permanent nature. March 2011 was therefore also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our current MOTH premises at 105 Drama Street. One of the landmarks of 105 Drama Street is a Second World War "Honey" tank which was presented by the South African Defence Force to our Shellhole during March 1974. We are planning a restoration project for said tank for some time in the future.

The happenings at Marshal Smuts in March were published in a special birthday edition and will therefore not be repeated for this monthly newsletter. Suffice to say *'it was great'*. (To view the Birthday Bullsheet, go to [www.moth.org.za](http://www.moth.org.za)).

We feature a remarkable gentleman in our series *"To live like a Moth"* in the form of George Mann. George will be 88 this month and we wish him continued health and smiles. He is one of the few octogenarians who just never complain about anything. Happy Birthday George! We also feature our 7<sup>th</sup> and last letter from the Home Front and continue with our series of South Africa's involvement in World War Two.

This Bullsheet is dedicated to the memory of Moth Hansie Matthee, born on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1901 and the last Great War veteran to serve at Marshal Smuts Shellhole.

## Old Bill of the Order visit to Marshal Smuts and Cape Western



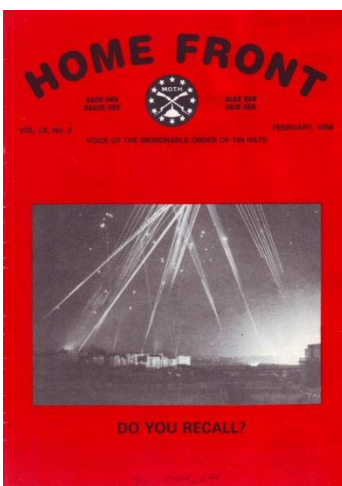
*Pictured with Moths Artie Elliot (Battledress) and Dave Revell (Red Barn Tavern of the Seas)*

Old Bill of the Order, Moth Mookie Wantenaar and his wife Ann, were special guests at our 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations. During their stay they were treated to true Cape Western hospitality.

On the Sunday following our parade, they visited Tommy Rendle VC and Blaauwberg Cuca Shellholes before being treated to lunch at Red Barn/ToTS. While at Red Barn/ToTS, Moth Wantenaar also visited the MESCA Cottages. On the Monday Moth Wantenaar paid a visit to Battledress Shellhole, viewed the Lakeside Cottages and then attended the Dawn Patrol monthly meeting. He was asked by Deputy Old Bill, Moth Billy Hill to join the top table, and after explaining his job description to the floor, closed the meeting in the proper MOTH manner. Tuesday night saw them relaxing at the Bakoven Cottages with The two Moths Olivier from Marshal Smuts before flying back to Durban on Wednesday.

From Marshal Smuts Shellhole, our sincere gratitude to all those Shellholes, who helped with contributions towards paying for the airfare; especially our dear Brother and Sister Moths at Dawn Patrol Shellhole!

(To read Moth Wantenaar's full resume, visit [www.moth.org.za](http://www.moth.org.za))



*Dear Madam*

*On the front page of Home Front, February 1986, we had a superb photo of the night sky over Alexandria in Egypt during a bombing raid. The caption, DO YOU RECALL? is familiar to us old Bods who happened to be in Amirya Base Camp at the time, mid 1941, after arrival from the Union. To us, about 20 miles southeast of the city, this was a familiar sight almost every night as we felt tremors of bombing for the first time.*

*Moth P.A. Vos, Freedom Shellhole*

## South Africans in the Battle of Britain - Capt *Dave Becker, SAAF Museum*

Among the legendary few were 21 South African-born fighter pilots of whom nine lost their lives in action while defending Great Britain from invasion. There were many more with South African connections who took part in the battle, in the air or on the ground.

The most senior of these was Air Vice-Marshal Sir Christopher Quintin Brand who commanded 10 Group, Fighter Command, based at Box in Wiltshire. His station commander at St Eval in Cornwall was Group Captain L G Le B Croke who later became Air Officer Commanding 25 Group of the Joint Air Training Scheme in South Africa. Jackie Sorour from Pretoria was the first woman to make a parachute jump in South Africa. She joined the WAAF in Britain as a radar operator, but by the latter half of 1940 was flying with the Air Transport Auxiliary delivering aircraft to RAF units.

Most famous of the fighter pilots in the battle was undoubtedly the lion-hearted South African '*Sailor*' Malan, born on a farm near Wellington in the Cape. He changed his career from the sea to the air in 1936 and was posted to 74 '*Tiger*' Squadron after receiving his wings; by this time he had acquired the nickname '*Sailor*' on account of his time with the Union Castle line. Claiming his first two victories over Dunkirk on 21 May 1940, he had claimed five more by the time the battle started in earnest; Between 19 July and 22 October he shot down six invaders. His Ten Rules for Air Fighting were printed and pinned up in crew rooms all over Fighter Command.

Albert Lewis from Kimberley also opened his account with the Luftwaffe over France in May, shooting down three Messerschmitt Bf 109s in one action. He received his nickname '*Zulu*' from the squadron commander Peter Townsend. Lewis scored ten in the battle, before being shot down on 27 September. Burned and blinded, he missed the rest of the battle and his recovery to

flying fitness took at least three months. Later, he commanded 26 Squadron in Ceylon.

Another South African to hit six during the battle was Basil '*Hugh*' Stapleton, with several probables to his credit, too. Also surviving a prang on 7 September, trying to stop the bombers getting through to London, he went on to become a flight commander with 257 '*Burma*' Squadron and, in 1944, commanded 247 Typhoon Squadron.

Percy Burton and his brother William were educated at Bishop's, Rondebosch; Percy eventually joined the RAF via the University Air Squadron at Oxford. Flying a Hurricane of his 249 Squadron on 27 September, he ran out of ammunition chasing a Messerschmitt Bf 110 fighter-bomber and rammed it to make sure both aircraft and flyers were destroyed. His brother, a Wellington bomber pilot, was killed during a raid on Cologne on 19 August 1941.

Then there was that great sergeant pilot Tom Wallace from Johannesburg credited with five victories in the battle and became the first South African to be awarded the DFM (Distinguished Flying Medal). Commissioned in 1943, he later commanded 609 Squadron for two months before he was shot down and killed over France. Also in 249 Squadron during August 1940 was P H V '*Pat*' Wells, later to make his home in South Africa and become sales manager for Comair; Jimmy '*Ossie*' Crossey who was born in Johannesburg; and Sgt G.C.C. Palliser who is also believed to have had South African connections.

Mentioned in the foregoing are but a few South Africans who flew with the few; other gallant fighters from this country who paid the supreme sacrifice during the battle included Nathaniel Barry, Carl Davies (an American national born and educated in South Africa), Ivor Difford, George Drake (whose wrecked Hurricane was located only in May 1972), Claude Goldsmith,

Richard Haviland, Caesar Hull DFC from Shangani, Rhodesia and Johannes Oelofse. In addition, Sgt Denis Helcke (educated at KES Johannesburg) was killed when he bailed out of his aircraft on a training flight over Kent on 17 September 1940. David Haysom, 'Dutch' Hugo, E J Morris, B van Mentz, A B Watkinson, Dennis Adams, M N Crossley, P R G Dexter, C P Green, J. A. A. Gibson and A C Rabagliati all brought

down enemy aircraft during the battle. It is impossible in so short a space to do justice to the exploits of all the South Africans who participated in the battle and this arbitrary choice in no way reflects on the great contributions rendered by those not mentioned.

### **To live like a Moth – Part 7 – George Mann**



George Mann was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1923 at Observatory near Cape Town. He grew up in the suburb and finished his Senior Certificate at Observatory Boys High, situated in Mowbray at the end of 1939. George enrolled at the beginning of 1940 as an indentured apprentice at the South African Railways and Harbours, for a period of three years, aiming to qualify as a Fitter and Turner. Working at the Salt River Works, George became friendly with a couple of other adventurous youngsters, none of whom were really interested in qualifying as Fitters and Turners while there was a War going on.

“One Monday in June 1940, Sterrenberg and I decided not to report for work at the S.A.R&H, but to rather go and report at the Army Camp at Polsmoor. Being indentured apprentices, we had to use false names to enlist. I registered as one George Manning. However, the Saturday I got the surprise of my life when I was called to the captain’s office; waiting inside the office was my father. My father, an Englishman by birth, was a Veteran of the Great War, who at some stages during that horrible war was gassed. He explained to the captain that I was still a minor and that I should be released owing the fact that I was already an indentured apprentice. My reply to the captain was that I do not know this man.

Back at the Salt River Works, my boss Mr Donald was sympathetic to my pleas and even promised to help me to get into the Army. After about four months I realised that nothing was going to come of this promise and started to make my own plans. The plan was simple; I would take my annual leave in December, ask for a return free pass to Johannesburg and then join the Engineering Corps at Zonderwater. It was towards the middle of December 1940 that I reported at Cape Town station. While waiting for my train to leave something happened that would alter the whole course of my life. A guy that I knew from Observatory, Roy Stephenson was returning as a war casualty from Abyssinia; escorting him on the hospital train was a lovely nursing probationer called Yvonne. The three of us started talking and when I had to leave Roy gave me her physical address in Johannesburg.

With this new information I boarded the train only to bump into Mr Hart, one of my bosses. This meant that I had to alter my plans and I decided to get off at Kimberley station. I stayed in Kimberley for a couple of days and went to enlist at the De Beers offices for the Engineering Corps, using the name of one George Hanley. I reported to Zonderwater in January 1941, started my basic training and only then informed my father. My first weekend pass I used to go and visit the girl that I met at Cape Town station. 1941 was spent in training and at the beginning of 1942 we were transferred to the 3rd South African Infantry Division, the reserve division stationed in South Africa. After the fall of Tobruk and the second Battle of El Alamein, the decision was taken to replace these troops with the 6th South African Armoured Division, to which we were going to be attached. The 6th was formed in January 1943, and on the 19 April we set sail for Port Suez on board the Ile de France, sailing around Madagascar and landing on the 30th of April.

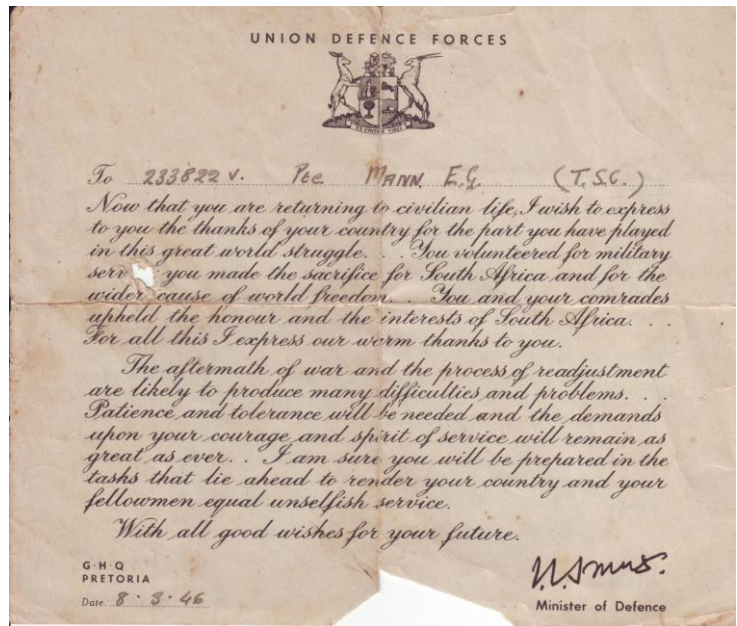
We started more intensified training near Khataba and it was here that I eventually told the truth about my name. I reported to Captain Barton-Bridges MC and tried to explain my circumstances. When I said that my real name is Ernest George...he completed the sentence with Mann and told me that he has at least 10 letters for this person who he doesn't know from a bar of soap. We now left to see the Major, who almost died of a heart attack when he was informed of this. After about 15 minutes of yelling, the Major came up with his decision, I was to be transferred to the Technical Workshop, based at Cairo. So working as a tiffy in Cairo and Alexandria, I had a royal time and those girls sure were pretty!

During April 1944 we set sail for Italy and I landed up working at the Technical Workshop based in Rome. We worked like hell in those workshops, fixing mostly Sherman Tanks, but boy those Italian girls were pretty! Towards the end of the War I was posted to Treviso where I again had a lovely time. And that is my story of the Second World War, I was no hero, but I enjoyed myself!" For his service during the War, George received the 1939/45 Star, Africa Star, Italy Star, Victory Medal and South Africa Service Medal.

George married Yvonne on the 26th of January 1946 in Johannesburg. He says that he soon realised that life on Civilian Street as a married man was a lot tougher than the army. He had to complete his apprenticeship, which meant studying in the evenings. In April 1946, George together with his father, brother and two cousins joined our Memorable Order at Jimmy Shellhole. George worked for the S.A.H&R in Johannesburg and Kimberley before he was transferred to Pinetown during 1956. At Pinetown he became a member at Better Ole Shellhole and he worked for the Frame Textile Group for more than 20 years. After his retirement during 1988, George went to live in the MOTH Cottages at Irene.



*George and Yvonne on their wedding day*



George and Yvonne were blessed with 3 daughters and a son, eight grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. They moved to Somerset West during 1999 and Yvonne passed away in 2004. George became a member of our Shellhole on the 21 October 2006; he is there every Wednesday and Friday for a beer and Amarula Cream; joking about when the food will be ready, always laughing and never shy to tell the youngsters of his War time endeavours! Thank you George!

**7<sup>th</sup> Letter from the Home Front**

September 1981: The following members were duly appointed to the executive committee – Old Bill Moth Taffy Lloyd, Wee Bill Moth Aubrey Noone, Adjutant Moth Tubby Hobart, Pay Bill Moth Copper Clarke and Sgt-Major Moth Jim Sparrow.

October 1981: Old Bill as delegate reported on the Dug Out meeting. He named the new members of Dug Out executive and mentioned that it is the first time since 1946 that our Shellhole does not have a representative on the Dug Out executive.

November 1981: The Australian recruit, F.P. Flanagan was initiated into the Order before the meeting proper. Moth Richards criticised the wording on the SA Legion programme. Moth

Wiehan replied that it was not a MOTH matter and that Moth Richards should direct his complaints to the Legion.

January 1982: Before the meeting proper, we stood for a minute in silence, remembering Moth's Maddocks, Russell and Waring, who answered to the Sunset Call during the festive season. We will remember them. Moth Hartman spoke about the forthcoming Bowls tournament in Pietermaritzburg, stating that the cost will be 10.00 ZAR per day.

February 1982: After a lengthy discussion the meeting decided by 15 votes to 14, to pay the licence fee of the South African Music Rights Association. Welfare Officer Wiehan thanked

Moth Clarke for the placing of the flag at half-mast, when members passed away.

March 1982: The Adjutant requested a duplicating machine to print the newsletters on. Moth Bouwer advised that he had donated such a machine to the Boy Scouts earlier and proposed that Moth Dockrall should find out if they were still using it. As for the giving of toasts after meetings, it was decided that only one toast be made.

April 1982: Moth Vigar said that a new Shellhole was formed in South West Africa and the blokes were appealing for donations towards their building fund and also appealed for a Red Cross donation box to be placed at the bar. Moth Barr replied that we had built our own Shellhole and believed that the South West Africans should do the same. Moth Hall objected to outside organisations asking for MOTH funds, stating: "we work for our own funds first."

May 1982: The now value of the hall had been placed at 28000.00 ZAR and on the proposal by Moth Dockrall and seconded by Moth Calder, it was decided to take cover against riots and political unrest. It was noted that the capitation fees were being raised from 4.00 ZAR to 6.00 ZAR. Moth Flanagan reported that 10 of his Australian friends (their shackles must have been removed) were visiting the area during October on a bowls tour and invited all Moth bowlers to contact him.

June 1982: The visitors included Moth's Jim Peddie of Boksburg and Chuck Charles of Oribi. Moth Clarke informed the Shellhole about the July Sweepstake he was running.

July 1982: Before the meeting proper, Old Bill informed the Shellhole of the passing of Moth Grossman. We will remember him. Old Bill informed the meeting that Transvaal Dug Out has reported the re-expulsion of one L.J. Groenewald.

August 1982: Arising from correspondence, Moth's Venter and Woods have both resigned from the Shellhole and Order. The Adjutant was castigated by the blokes for announcing that the annual subscriptions would amount to 28.00 ZAR, before it was passed by floor members. The meeting decided that although Dug Out required the Nominal roll by the end of August, we will not send ours in before the end of October. That way we'll have a better idea of how many members will be available, and one of our Life Members will be moving from our area, so we do not have to add him to the Nominal roll.

#### Old Bill Report 1981/82:

Members (64)

Average meeting attendance (28)

Meetings: 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 20:00

7 Members transferred in

5 Members transferred out

2 New recruits

Sunset Call: Moth's Harry Russell, A. Maddocks, Reg Waring and Kurt Grossman.

Thanks to goading by one of our visitors we improved in one particular area, that of visits to other Shellholes. The following list is applicable:

11<sup>th</sup> May, 11 members to Hellwan, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 9 members to Kelly's Eye, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 3 members to Bomb Alley, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 9 members to Plum & Apple.

Yours under the Tin Hat

Taffy Lloyd – Old Bill

## Important dates April 2011

### Birthdays

#### 07 April

1946: Syria receives independence from France  
1946: **Marshal Smuts Shellhole officially issued with Charter by Cape Midlands DugOut.** (The first meeting takes place in the lounge of the old Somerset Hotel and is attended by eight dedicated members)

#### 12 April

1908: Robert Lee Scott Jnr; American pilot and author of God is my co-pilot  
1923: Ann Miller; American actress and dancer  
1923: **Moth George Mann**  
1941: Bobby Moore; English footballer  
1942: Jacob Zuma; President of the Republic of South Africa

### Events

#### 15 April

1865: Abraham Lincoln dies without regaining consciousness after being shot the previous evening by actor John Wilkes Booth  
1892: The General Electric Company is formed.  
1896: Closing ceremony of the Games of the 1<sup>st</sup> Olympiad in Athens

### The Light of Remembrance

11 April 1917: J. Brink; Royal Flying Corps 14 Squadron  
10 April 1918: C.J. Hindley 1<sup>st</sup> SA Infantry Brigade  
28 April 1941: A.E.R. Fry Royal Air Force 59 Squadron  
01 April 1961: Charles Evenden Moth "O"

### **We will remember them**

#### Interesting reads on the Internet:

[www.samilitaryhistory.org](http://www.samilitaryhistory.org)  
[www.firstworldwar.com](http://www.firstworldwar.com)  
[www.redsockfriday.com](http://www.redsockfriday.com)

[www.ninefoxtrot.org](http://www.ninefoxtrot.org)  
[www.secondworldwar.com](http://www.secondworldwar.com)

Please e-mail Contributions to [gffj@sun.ac.za](mailto:gffj@sun.ac.za)

#### 14 April

1904: Sir John Gielgud; English actor  
1925: Abel Muzorewa; Prime Minister of Zimbabwe  
1932: Loretta Lynn; Country musician and singer  
1949: John Shea; American actor  
1950: **Moth Adriaan van Zyl**

#### 23 April

1564: William Shakespeare  
1928: Shirley Temple  
1936: Roy Orbison  
1939: Lee Majors  
1949: **Moth Duncan MacKenzie**

1912: The RMS Titanic sinks in the North Atlantic  
1989: Hillsborough football disaster  
2011: **Marshal Smuts monthly meeting at 18:00**

