

# Troopers' Tales of the British South Africa Police



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## The Chronicler's Tale

Introduction by Alan Stock

Editor of *The Outpost* 1966 – 1984

Editing the B.S.A. Police Magazine, *The Outpost*, in its closing decades carried a few additional responsibilities: photographer, sports commentator, book reviewer, crossword compiler and one of the most time-consuming duties – disguised as 'The Chronicler' – hosting the regular 'Old Comrades' pages of the magazine. This was where former members of all vintages renewed fleeting as well as life-long friendships, shared experiences and, no doubt, added a wrinkle or two to their stories to compensate for the other wrinkles they could do nothing about.

General topics and specific events debated in Old Comrades had a way of snowballing but so did the contacts (and magazine readership) as long-lost members of the Force were encountered in some distant corner of the globe, current addresses were revealed and the 'do you remember' chorus began in earnest. It was not always easy for The Chronicler to find time to encourage the snowballing by responding to the letters old comrades sent to the magazine. It was also a trifle hazardous if one's grasp of Force history was delicate. Fortunately there were a few outstanding former members with both the time and the enthusiasm to rally to the cause of reworking the Force's history. More of them later.

And it was not only Force history that came under the venerable magnifying glass. There was much more than a glint in the eye of the former trooper who took exception to the magazine's cover photograph in June 1967 which showed a 'modern' mounted trooper on duty outside the B.S.A. Police Pavilion at Bulawayo's International Trade Fair.

'The animal on display is a terrible monstrosity to be shown as a troop horse and I feel the picture must surely have been taken as a 'gag'. After studying its different points, I decided it must be a new breed: Equine-ox for instance! The forelegs are standing at attention while the hind legs are terribly cow-hocked. And what about the tail, dangling very close to the fetlocks? Is this a new fashion? The forelegs show cloven hooves, as also does the near hind, while the off hind looks as though it was wearing a large sized poultrice. It is a very sad picture indeed and no advertisement for my old outfit'.

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