

- Provincial Old Bill Steward Howie
- District Old Bill Ivor Joubert
- And the man of the day
- Old Bill Koos Moorcroft of the Casa Mia Shellhole

- Other veterans
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I spent a long time in preparing this talk. It will therefore be quite brief.

We are gathered here today to commemorate - and pay tribute, to our veterans - and fallen veterans. And today specifically those of the Hot War of the Cold War era in South West Africa/Namibia, and Angola - Also known as the South African Bush War - Why were we there and what were the outcomes?

I will deal with this matter in three parts

A) Black Sheep B) Tommy Atkinses and C) Kameraden

Firstly, Black Sheep: I am proud to inform you that I was also a member of the Memorable Order of Tin Hats. I belonged to the **Black Sheep Windy Hole** Shellhole in Windhoek, South West Africa, previously called Deutsch Süd West Afrika - I'll come back to another Black Sheep again a little later.

Secondly, Tommy Atkinses: I should like to recall a visit I paid to Manie Maritz. It was just before the South African Springboks played against the British and Irish Lions at Loftus Versveld Pretoria. He is the son of the late Boer General Manie Maritz. I met him for the first time in 1954 when he was a physical training instructor at the SA Military College.

The aim of my visit to him was to confirm an historic event in 1901 at O'Kiep during the Anglo-Boer war. General Manie Maritz had formally negotiated a time, date and place for a rugby match with his British counterpart, Major Edwards. It would be between the burgers - meaning soldiers of the two Boer republics - and the Tommy Atkinses, meaning soldiers of the British army.

Manie, who is far my senior, told me that his father confirmed that a ceasefire had in fact been negotiated and that the game did in fact take place.

Now, save a second to ponder this incident: it was unthinkable and unprecedented since it took place at the end-phase of a gruesome war full of atrocities, loss of life, property, and emotional tragedy.

Anyhow, what Manie couldn't tell me was what the score was, but as they say in good English, "a good time was had by all". And that brings me to -

Thirdly, Kameraden: During my first tour of duty in South West Africa/Namibia, 1970-74, I attended a number of events of veteran organizations. I was present at one such

historic occasion, probably in Tsumeb. I say historic because it was a joint effort by former adversaries: the Alte Kamaraden, the Junge Kamaraden, and the Moths.

The Alte Kamaraden were those Germans who participated in WW I. The Junge Kamaraden were those Germans who were veterans of WW II. The Moths represented the veterans of the South African and Allied Forces. These three organisations jointly paid tribute to the living veterans, and commemorated those who had been killed in action or who had already passed on.

Just imagine! This motley gathering of erstwhile enemies - who actually made war in the true sense of the word - paying tribute to

old comrades and foes alike! And, in good English, a good time was had by all.

And now, as promised, I come back to the **Black Sheep**:

We, who are still alive and well, including the veterans of the Bush War, have experienced in our recent past that we have become the Black Sheep of the Bush War. Propagandists and cheats without any military history of their own, claim and broadcast that we have lost! Can you believe it?

However, the history record speaks for itself:

We, the SADF, **entered** the war for South West Africa/Namibia, and in Angola, at the peak of the expansion of the Soviet Union and its Marxist allies' interests in Africa during the 1980s- the Hot Part of the Cold War era in that region.

And we, the SADF, **left** south western Africa, two decades later, at the time of the total withdrawal of the Soviet and Cuban proxy forces from Angola, as well as from countries such as Mozambique, and others.

And by the way, we, the SADF, prevented them from even putting as much as a toe over the border into Namibia.

And then, in November 1989, the Berlin Wall crashed - symbolizing the demise of global Soviet communist expansion.

The SADF was the main factor in stopping the communist Soviet expansion, and it was the SADF that secured democratic and peaceful outcomes in Namibia, and in South Africa during the late 80s and early 90s.

Dear friends, I conclude –

While we, the Moths and other veteran organisations, worship our veterans, past and present (like General Manie Maritz and Major Edwards), and like the Alte Kamaraden, the Junge Kamaraden and the Tommy Atkinses, we too have always been ready - and are still keen - to confraternise with our erstwhile opponents: Russians, Angolans, Cubans and the like, but those cheats who now brand us as losers, Black Sheep, make it very difficult for us.

Those who unconvincingly try to bluff the world that they had won the war in southern Africa, and who scandalously pull out all plugs to denigrate our proven military history, are making confraternisation a pipe dream.

However, (even while I still honour those who opposed us on the field of battle as is the universal statutory military culture), today I bring praise to all our own brothers in arms, dead and alive meaning:

black, white, coloured, Indian, male and female,

I salute professional soldiers, part-time soldiers, volunteers and national servicemen;

Everyone in brown, blue and white, the medics, the fighters and their supporters: the administrators, logisticians, and other indispensable supporting members –

Members of the South West Africa Territory Force, the odd soldier of fortune, all those who were there, and all those who gave their all in support...

I - and everyone present, I'm sure - salute you all. You are the heroes of the Cold War.

Those of you who were there, you seldom had air superiority, you were always outnumbered, you never had the Roubles, you didn't have the international support - you didn't have the same political support as our enemies had - all you got were boycotts and sanctions, and now: smears – you became the Black Sheep.

Nevertheless, when South Africa was in trouble, **those** who have already passed on and **you** who are still alive, who fought against all odds, **you were the most important single factor to make possible the democratic Namibia and South Africa that we have today.**

And so I end my talk. It wasn't meant to be a morale booster, it was simply meant to be a review of the stark naked facts of your excellence – you and those who are not with us today.

I and all of us here will remember you. May God Bless You.