

disc navigation



How to navigate through this eCatalogue.

To move between pages click on [prev page](#) or [next page](#) or use the arrow keys or 'page up', 'page down'

at anytime to return to contents page click [contents](#)

When on the contents page, click any of the paragraph headings to move to the specific paragraph

If or when Adobe Reader requests permission to go to "Full Screen Mode" click YES
To exit "Full Screen Mode" push Esc

[start](#)



unburdened - burden

barry rautenbach

2012

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)

contents

conscription	5
ex-servicemen	7
border	9
sixty bodies	11
fabric	13
voices	15
end notes	16
list of illustrations	17
bibliography	19
curriculum vitae	21

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)



Fig 1. *Untitled*. Image available at: www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?64954-South-African-National-Defence-Force/page137. Image edited for purposes of this catalogue.

conscription

How does an artist express the burden that was conscription into the SADF (South African Defence Force)?

[contents](#)

[prev page](#)

[next page](#)

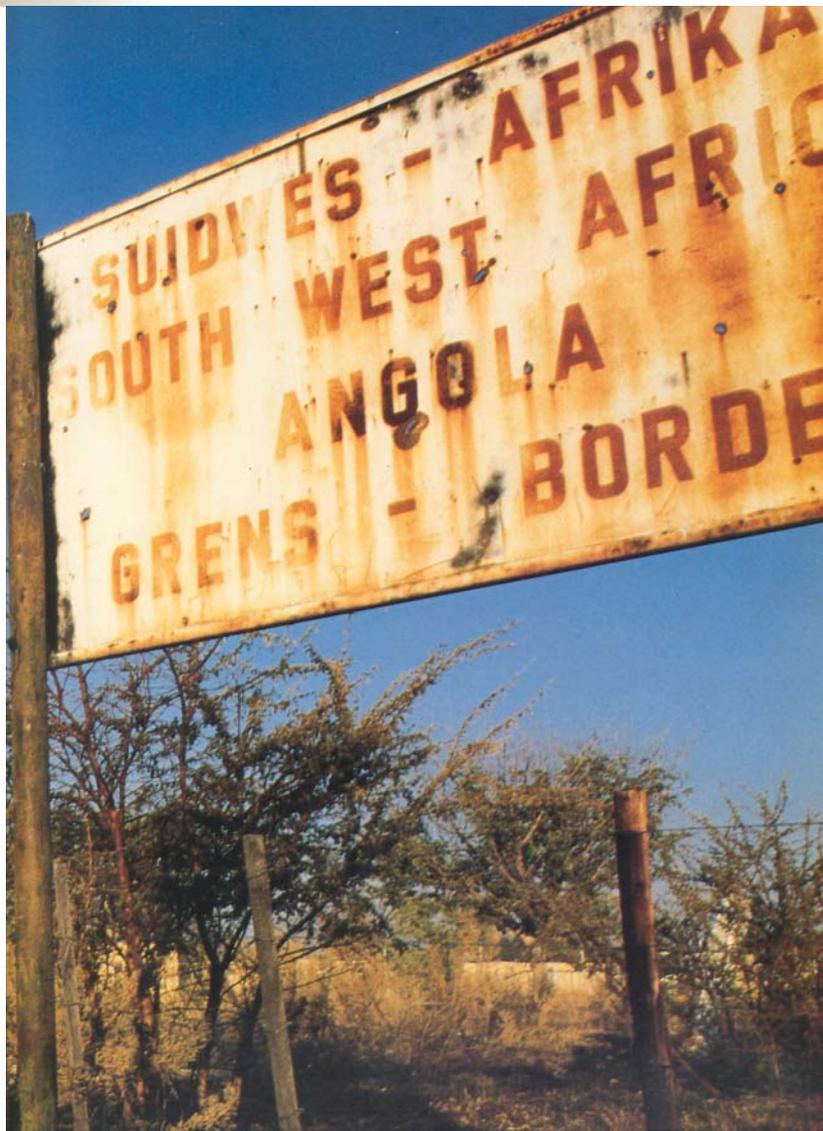


Fig 2. Battered and streaked with rust, this sign says it all. Till well into the 1970s, much of the border was even less formal than this, (Steenkamp 1989: 17).

ex-servicemen

What began as an exploration of the emotional masks that we all wear evolved into an exploration of the loss of the voices of ex-servicemen. Why did white South African men allow their leaders to trick them into the belief that being a soldier in the SADF was heroic? There was no asking if you wanted to join the SADF, it was the law, whether you liked it or not. The National Party needed “cannon fodder”¹ for their military machine so that they (in their delusional state) could stem the tide of the “rooi gevaar”² that was presumably spilling over the then South West African (SWA) border. It did not matter what you did in the SADF, what mattered was that you were part of the machine. As a serviceman you took on the responsibility to protect your loved ones and the fatherland.

[contents](#)

[prev page](#)

[next page](#)



Fig 3. Detail of exam installation, *unburdened - burden*, October 2012. Photograph by Barry Rautenbach.

border

Coming clean for soldiers is not an easy task. As South African men, we are taught, “men don’t cry”. Most men cry at some point in their lives, they tell their stories about the time they spent in situations of war and their emotions fail them. Silence about the Bush War³ and the subsequent conflict in the townships⁴ of South Africa, has not helped to ease the burden. Family and friends have told the ex-servicemen to “...bury the Border...” (Batley 2007, 122) because they are”, “...sick and tired of it.” (Batley 2007, 122). When the new South Africa was dawning, the fear of reprisal kept most ex-servicemen away from the TRC hearings. They bare an unbearable burden on their shoulders and few have had the opportunity to let the past be heard.

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)



Fig 4. An insurgent, lying in the muddy trench in which he met his death, (Steenkamp 1989: 219). Image edited for purposes of this catalogue.

sixty bodies

The following story, as related by Johan Potgieter about his experience after the battle of Bridge 14, serves to illustrate that after many years in passing, the tragedy of this unnecessary war still stains the fabric of South African society.

“and the dead had to be buried. The engineers used a tractor to dig a trench. We gathered three hundred and sixty bodies at the targets, which was not pleasant. Artillery is different from bullets, the gun projectiles tear the flesh, it was brutal.

To this day I feel sorry for the soldiers, who had to do that, because after the battle we advanced and deployed at the target, where death had filled the air for more than a week.”

It was inhuman, unbearable. The soldiers really suffered.

It made them crack. And I could not help them. I did not know what to do. All I knew was that we had to get out and go and deploy somewhere else. We did that soon enough, deployed in a clear area, but the damage had been done.

I could not say how it plays out today. Talk to the woman who sleep with these gunners? The pain is there, they hide it,” (Bush War Volume 1, DVD 1: 6. Bridge 14.)

Few young men would actively want to experience a situation such as the one above. At eighteen most would rather have “wanted ... [to] live” (Bok van Blerk, Die Kaplyn. 2009⁵)

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)



Fig 5. 218 Anya Gallaccio. *Red on Green*, 2002. 10,000 red roses. 260 x 550 x 6 cm. as installed at Kunstmuseum, Wolfgang, Germany.

fabric

The placing of rocks and sand on an old SADF uniform compresses and distorts its shape. The weight also strains and damages the fabric over time, the weight being a metaphor for the burden of forced conscription that weighs down on society. The fabric of old military uniforms has an ephemeral (impermanent) quality like the roses used in Anya Gallaccio's, *Red on Green*, 2002, where 10,000 red roses were left to transform from "florist-fresh" to being "shrivelled stalks, losing their colour and becoming smelly and mouldy..."(Collins 2007, 213)⁶. The fabric of the uniforms has transformed from items of functional value into items that have been discarded, rotting in a warehouse; becoming mouldy and smelly. They are no longer of use but they have a human memory and a silent voice that is recognisable to a generation of people. The uniforms are symbols of the apartheid area, old news but still recent enough in history to be remembered.

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)

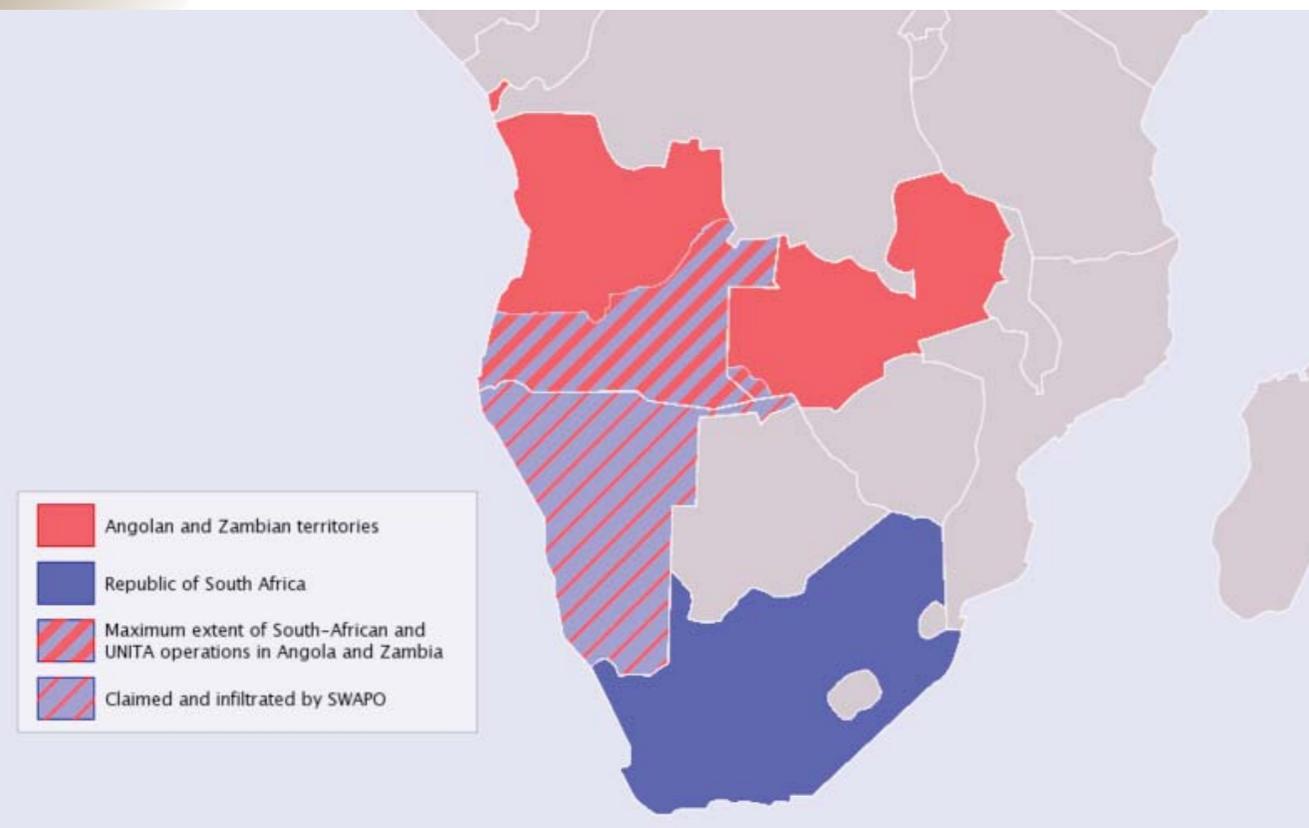


Fig 6. Map of the territories during the conflict. Image available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:South_Africa_Border_War_Map.png

Once one's duty to one's country was done, the still young men were released back into society. This would have been an ideal situation - back in civy street – your freedom your own again – living life once again. Nevertheless, most carried with them (into the present) their time spent in the SADF.

The silence is slowly beginning to reverberate with the voices of ex-servicemen who endured forced conscription into the SADF.

[contents](#)

[prev page](#)

[next page](#)

endnotes

1. It is known that Jonas Savimbi^{1.1} asked the South African government to help him fight his war against the MPLA^{1.2} and the Cubans.

1.1. Jonas Malheiro Savimbi (1934-2002), founder and leader of UNITA from 1966 to 2002 upon his death.

1.2. The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

2. "die rooi gevaar" when translated means "the red danger". which was known as communism.

3. The Bush War or Border War was fought between 1966 and 1989 with South Africa and UNITA on one side against the Angolan government (MPLA) and SWAPO on the other side, supported by the Russians and Cubans.

4. South African soldiers did duty in the black townships from 1984.

5. Translated song words from Bok van Blerk's song 'Die Kaplyn' released in 2009 from his album Afrikanerhart.

6. Anya Gallaccio, Red on Green (2002). 10,000 red roses. 260 x 550 x 6cm (102 ¼ x 216 ½ x 2 ½ in). As installed at Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg, Germany. (Collins 2007: 213, fig. 218).

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)

list of illustrations

- Front Cover Photograph by Al J. Venter (Steenkamp 1989: Rear cover).
- Front of inner Page Detail of exam installation, *unburdened - burden*, October 2012. Photograph by Barry Rautenbach.
- Back of inner page Detail of test installation, *unburdened - burden*, October 2012. Photograph by Barry Rautenbach.
- Fig 1. **4** *Untitled*. Image available at: [www.militaryphotos.net /forums/showthread.php?64954-South-African-National-Defence-Force/page137](http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/showthread.php?64954-South-African-National-Defence-Force/page137). Image edited for purposes of this catalogue.
- Fig 2. **6** Battered and streaked with rust, this sign says it all. Till well into the 1970s, much of the border was even less formal than this, (Steenkamp 1989: 17).
- Fig 3. **8** Detail of exam installation, *unburdened - burden*, October 2012. Photograph by Barry Rautenbach.
- Fig 4. **10** An insurgent, lying in the muddy trench in which he met his death, (Steenkamp 1989: 219). Image edited for purposes of this catalogue.
- Fig 5. **12** **218** Anya Gallaccio. *Red on Green*, 2002. 10,000 red roses. 260 x 550 x 6 cm. As installed at Kunstmuseum, Wolfgang, Germany. (Collins 2007, 213)
- Fig 6. **14** Map of the territories during the conflict. Image available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:South_Africa_Border_War_Map.png
- Fig 7. **18** Detail of exam installation, *unburdened - burden*, October 2012. Photograph by Barry Rautenbach.
- Fig 8. **20** Personnel Services Corps Insignia, (Stander 1985: 111).



Fig 7. Detail of exam installation, *unburdened - burden*, October 2012. Photograph by Barry Rautenbach.

bibliography

Batley, K. 2007. *A secret burden Memories of the Border War by South African soldiers who fought in it*. Jonathan Ball Publishers, Cape Town.

Bush War Volume 1, Volume 2 [DVD-ROM]. 2009. MNET, South Africa.

Collins, J. 2007. *Sculpture Today*. Phaidon Press Inc. London, New York.

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.crwflags.com>

<http://www.historytoday.com>

<http://www.militaryphotos.net>

<http://www.nytimes.com>

<http://www.sahistory.org.za>

<http://www.youtube.com>

Stander, S. 1985. *Like the wind The Story of the South African Army*. Saayman & Weber (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town.

Steenkamp, W. 1989. *South Africa's Border War 1966-1989*. Ashanti Publishing (Pty) Ltd, a division of Ashanti International Films, Gibraltar.

Thompson, J.H. 2006. *An unpopular war From afkak to bosbefok. Voices of South African National Servicemen*. Zebra Press, Cape Town.

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)



Fig 8. Personnel Services Corps Insignia,
(Stander 1985: 111).

[contents](#)

[prev
page](#)

[next
page](#)

curriculum vitae

Barry Rautenbach

+27 (0)83 662 3986

baz@lantic.net

www.barryrautenbachartist.co.za

Member of the Association of Arts Pretoria

Member of the Centurion Arts Association

Member of SANAVA (South African National Association of Visual Arts)

2005 to Present - Bachelor of Visual Arts (UNISA).

2009 - Members Exhibition, Association of Arts Pretoria.

2010 - Members Exhibition, Association of Arts Pretoria.

2011 - Members Exhibition, Association of Arts Pretoria.

2012 - Members Exhibition, Association of Arts Pretoria.

2012 - Members Exhibition, Centurion Art Association.

2012 - Artist of the Year Exhibition, Centurion Art Association
- Category winner - Sculpture
- Overall winner - Artist of the Year

2013 - Members Exhibition, Association of Arts Pretoria

2013 - Ar(t)s Poetica in Wonderland, Centurion Art Gallery