Tish WAGONER (nee Patricia Newman) writes "I am a fourth generation Rhodesian. My mother’s family descended from Pioneers and her family name, in Bulawayo, was OLVER. Her siblings were Bobby, Sydney, Chris and Margaret. Her mother’s name was Eileen “Ning” OLVER and she taught music and piano at the Bulawayo Convent. He was born Eileen SMITH, in jail, while in protective custody during the Matabele uprising. My cousins include Colleen NEL, Graham WRIGHT, Danny WHITE, Keith OLVER just to name a few. I grew up in Salisbury and moved to America as a teenager many years ago. M school chum, Shelagh PHILPOTT, is someone with whom I would like to make contact again. I would also like to hear from Toni HASLER. We all attended the Salisbury Convent in the early 60s. My brothers Kit and Francis attended St. George’s College and my younger brother, Paul, was at Hartmann House. My father was with the N.R.B. and we eventually came over to the US as part of the diplomatic corps.

Terry REMMER writes “I have heard from three people since joining the magazine. I rarely see a name I know in the magazine although I

Rhodesian Army Archives

The University of the West of England has just been awarded £423,000 by the Arts and Humanities Research Council to research and catalogue the archives of the Rhodesian army. This project will be carried out in partnership with the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum.

At present the archive is sitting in hundreds of uncatalogued boxes in the Bristol-based museum. Researchers who have investigated the boxes have found gems such as poignant photographs of soldiers on both sides of the war for independence; intelligence reports; operational instructions, and policy debates exposing the strengths and weaknesses of a doomed but desperate government. However, there is no way of locating specific documents and no organising principle behind the collection, which was saved from destruction after independence in 1980 and smuggled into South Africa.

The three-year project will produce a comprehensive searchable catalogue of this unique collection, with user-friendly web-based access, and a guide to the contents. Up to 10,000 pages of material will also be digitised and included in the Aluka Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa collection, which documents the liberation struggles in southern Africa since the end of World War II. Aluka is a separate project supported in part by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Project leader Dr. Diana Jeater is Principal Lecturer in African History in UWE’s Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences, and also Chair of the Britain Zimbabwe Society. She said:

“This is a really exciting collection with something for military and social historians, those interested in liberation struggles and questions of identity, and the wider community.

“For forty years, the wars of liberation in southern Africa had a profound impact on the region. Amongst those opposing African majority rule, the Rhodesian Army has been mythologised as a formidable fighting machine. This archive offers for the first time an opportunity to test the folklore surrounding this force, and to situate it in its time and place. The history of Zimbabwe and its links with Britain continue to have resonance in our communities today.”

The team includes Research Fellow Tim Lovering, who is a military historian and trained archivist. He said: "The project’s link with the Aluka collection offers a form of repatriation for the material that had to be taken from the country in secret and hidden in people’s garages in order to save it. Thanks to this project present-day Zimbabweans, some of whom lost relatives in the war of independence, will have access to this era in their history."

A full-time archivist will be appointed and the project will welcome volunteers who are training to be archivists or PhD students who wish to base theses on the material.

The project begins in September, 2006 and the results will be presented at a public conference, and provide the basis for output such as papers, books and theses.

Gareth Griffiths, Director of BECM, said, "This award confirms the importance of the collections which the Museum Trust has saved for the nation over the past decade. It is enormously exciting that, at last, the work of the Museum staff in collecting this material is being recognised and that it will soon be available to scholars around the world".

Kevin was one of the “Harare Five” that became known as the “Harare Three”. After almost 18 years in Zimbabwe prisons, five of them on “death row”, Kevin was released on 1 July 2006, along with Michael Smith and Philip Conjwayo. When all “political prisoners” in South Africa who had participated in the “armed struggle” - on both sides - were given amnesty in 1994, the “Harare Five” should have been freed as well. Despite appeals for their release from several quarters, including President Mandela himself, the men continued to be incarcerated in Chikuribi Prison at President Mugabe’s pleasure.

That Nelson Mandela should have taken time to see and speak with Kevin is remarkable in itself, and indicates the humility of Mandela, in contrast to the person who held the “Harare Three” captive in defiance of Mandela’s plea for their release.

Kevin’s request to see Mandela in person, to thank him for his concern for the well-being of the “Harare Three”, is also indicative of the reconciliation that has taken place in South Africa.

KEVIN WOODS MEETS NELSON MANDELA

It’s not easy to get an audience with former South African President Nelson Mandela and, if one does, it’s generally for no more than 15 minutes. However, Kevin Woods was granted a 30 minute meeting with the great man on 14 November 2006, having applied three months earlier.