

Project name: AL3283

Date of interview: 9 February 2009

Location of interview: Garsfontein, Pretoria

Language/s of interview: Afrikaans/ English

Length of interview: 13 minutes 53 seconds

Name of Interviewer: De Wet Potgieter

Name of interviewee/s: Colonel Vic McPherson

Name of translator (if any): De Wet Potgieter

Name of transcriber:

Notes on access and use (if any):

Audio file name/s of interview: AL3283\_PTA\_MCPHERSONVIC\_20090209\_4

Interviewer	I am talking to Vic McPherson, colonel. Vic, what was your last posting before you retired from the police?
Vic	I was a colonel and I was the area administrative head for Central Johannesburg.
Interviewer	And, at the time of, let us name them all three- the London bomb, the Lusaka bomb and the Arusha incident- in what section did you serve?
Vic	I was with the security branch, head office, the security branch then decided, our bosses made the decision, because we had access to agents abroad and in Africa, that we should create the intelligence section. It was called several code names, I think at first we were E, and later changed to D. So when we seized operations at head quarters I was attached to D section.
Interviewer	And until the last this units was known as D section?
Vic	D section, yes.
Interviewer	You would like to read into the tape recorder a written version of your career as a policeman, so go ahead.
Vic	Good, I am thinking of naming the book, Enigma, referring to that particular cryptogram. The cryptograph designed by the Germans.
Interviewer	And your code name, your pseudonym?

Vic	Klaus Dietrich.
Interviewer	Say again.
Vic	<p>Klaus Dietrich (he spelled it). Dietrich- like Marlene Dietrich. It was a hot and humid day in December 1966, quite normal for Durban during that time of the year. Having finished school at Jim Fouché High School in Bloemfontein, I was on holiday at my parent's home.</p> <p>I was pondering about my future. I received my call up papers from the South African Army to report to 5SAI Ladysmith for 18 months more than 20 months later. That meant that I had to find a temporary work.</p> <p>In those days no company would have employed me under those circumstances. I had ambitions to become a scientific researcher at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).</p> <p>My ambitions took a turn when my father introduced me to the neighbour, a formidable and respected policeman in the community. He convinced me to become a policeman, just to see how it turns out.</p> <p>Having a restless mind and thinking of an adventurous future in the police, there was no hesitation and I immediately signed up. Six months later in the South African police college, Pretoria, the training moulded me and other policemen into well motivated men to serve the community.</p> <p>Dedicated we were posted to police stations all over South Africa and Southwest Africa.</p> <p>At that point of time the political situation in South Africa and Rhodesia was in turmoil, politically and through sabotage acts. South Africa faced an onslaught from all our borders, including Rhodesia and Southwest Africa (today Namibia).</p> <p>The members of the African National Congress via Umkhonto we Sizwe and Pan Africanist Congress via the People 's Liberation Army, committed sabotage.</p> <p>The South African Communist Party was especially active on the labour front causing countrywide strikes. It was a crucial time in the history of South Africa.</p> <p>Little did I know at that time that I would become involved in a war where, instead of being an ordinary policeman for the community, I would become a para military policeman.</p> <p>Spending a few months in uniform at the Montclair police station in Durban, I volunteered for duty on the border between Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Zambia.</p> <p>I underwent an counter insurgency course over three weeks at the police college.</p> <p>That time South Africa and Rhodesia were plagued with insurgencies of the ANC (MK) and PAC (Apla) across our borders. The freedom fighters were using Rhodesia as one of the way of incursions infiltrating South Africa.</p>

	<p>Rhodesia, under a white government with Ian Smith as prime minister suffered the same problem with Zapu en Zanu freedom fighters crossing their borders from Zambia, Angola and Tanzania.</p> <p>We were flown from Waterkloof air force airport by Hercules C130 aeroplane to Victoria Falls air force airport. We were issued with the British South African Police camouflage and appointed as a cover to the BSAP with BSAP appointment certificate. What it meant if you were caught, you were Rhodesian. You were wearing Rhodesian camouflage and you were always Rhodesian. As far as the world was concerned, we were never in Rhodesia. It was never admitted by South Africa and Rhodesia that foreign army was on the border- in the war on the border.</p> <p>We were posted in platoons of 30 all along the Zambezi river border from Botswana, Zambia, and Southwest Africa.</p>