



The RAR Regimental Association has been informed of the recent passing in South Africa of Brigadier Norman Orsmond and Olivia, his wife of 67 years. She died on 27 June 2023, and he died shortly afterwards on 5 July. They are survived by their two daughters, Penelope and Jennifer.

Norman was Rh Army Director of Signals 1971 to 1973. He will be remembered with admiration and gratitude by E Coy RAR Nkomo 1968. Appointed to replace Mike Shute as OC, the war intensifying, and not an infantryman, some tests beckoned. Not surprisingly he proved equal to the task both at a leadership and tactical level. His leadership was of the unruffled, no fuss variety with the intellect that he was. Amongst the many new perspectives he brought was to employ his signals know how to deploy VHF communication links at sub-unit level - the first such innovation at sub-unit level. He always had ideas and solutions. A gentleman and rock-solid family member, he made a difference in 1968. With thanks for a job well done.

The Chair, Committee and Membership of the RAR Regimental Association extended our deep condolences to his family and friends.

"You have fought the Good Fight, brave soldier! Now go in peace to God who created and loved you.

We will remember you! We will meet in that Haven of Peace"

Wakarwa kurwa kwakanaka, soja rakashinga! Chienda hako murugare kuna Mwari wako akakusika akakuda.

Ticharamba tichikurangarira! Dzamara tasanganazve kudenga rorugare. (Shona)

Ulwile ukulwa okuhle ngesibindi Qhawe lamaQhawe! Hamba kahle uphumule ezandleni zeNkosi eyakudalayo, ekuthandayo njalo.

Sizahlala sikukhumbula! Sobonana ezulwini, endaweni yokuthula. (Ndebele)

Norman Orsmond joined the SRSC (Southern Rhodesia Staff Corps) in 1953 and served as an instructor before his posting to 1 Comd Sig Sqn under the late Maj W J Jenkins. After attending a subaltern's course at the Royal School of Signals in 1955, he was responsible for signal training of regular members for some time before being posted to the Signals Directorate as GS03.

During 1960 he was appointed OC 1 Sig Sqn (previously I Comd Sig Sqn) which became 4(L of C) Sig Sqn on re-organization during 1962. He then returned to the Signals Directorate as a GS02, where he continued to serve for a further year after the breakup of the Federation.

In 1965 Norman was a student at the Staff College, Camberley. UDI almost resulted in his immediate return to Rhodesia. However, his Staff Duties course had been completed the day before UDI and students had been presented with their certificates the previous evening! And because his wife was still recovering from major spinal surgery, he could not immediately return home, so continued unofficially to participate in the post-graduate activities of the Course.

During the following two years he served in Army HQ as a GS01 in both the Directorate and G Branch, as well as completing a Company Commanders course at the School of Infantry, Gwelo. He was then 'Extra Regimentally Employed' (ERE) as OC E Coy I RAR based at Inkomo Barracks until 1969 when he was appointed Commandant School of Signals for two years. Towards the end of 1970 Norman was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and took over from Bill de Haast as Director of Signals, serving in this capacity until December 1973.

From 1974 to 1975 Norman was the Signals member of a Joint Operational Planning Staff in Pretoria, during which time he was promoted to Colonel. In 1976, on promotion to Brigadier, he was Acting Commander, 3 Brigade (Op THRASHER) during the prolonged absence of Brig A N O MacIntyre. His last appointment before retirement after 26 years' service was MLO in Pretoria for about 2½ years.

(From BUSH TELEGRAPH (a combined History of the Rhodesian Army Corps of Signals from the early 60s until Zimbabwe Independence in 1980), by Lt Cols Gordon MUNRO DMM and Henton JAABACK DMM)