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Memoirs of Anthony Richard Turton**

**The White Stallion of Ongiva**

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We were called to an urgent briefing by the Squadron Commander one day. A strike force from 61 Mech had become trapped in a minefield and one of the tank-killer Ratel's had been taken out. The mines were British Mk 7's with their characteristic detonation under the second wheel of the vehicle – the first wheel arming with the second wheel detonating the mine. The whole crew had been killed, sadly including a set of twin brothers, who were riding in the same vehicle against regulation. Our mission was to accompany the recovery crew to provide fire support as needed.

Approaching the site of the incident, the turret of the Ratel some distance from the hull, having been ripped off as the on-board ammunition was ignited, a gut-wrenching *thump* hit us in the stomach. The main recovery vehicle, a mine proof "Wit Hings" (White Stallion – the Tiffy symbol), had detonated an undetected mine. As the dust settled a disgruntled Tiffy Sergeant Major half rolled out of the cab. Surveying the site that greeted him, he let rip with a customary string of profanities. The central wheel of the Wit Hings was hanging at a crazy angle with oil dribbling from the exposed half-shaft. Without any further blasphemy, the Tiffy contingent got to work. They jacked up the middle axle, now missing one wheel, and placed it in a chain sling. A hastily cut wooden plug stopped the oil leak.

With the Wit Hings hastily taken care of, the Tiffies started to recover the bombed-out Ratel. To my great amazement, the Wit Hings emerged from the bush, with recovered Ratel and detached turret in tow, seemingly unscathed despite the fact that a large anti-tank mine had just removed its one wheel. Escorting the vehicle back to Ongiva I was convinced that it would be kept there for a few days while repairs were effected. This was not to be as the Sergeant Major confidently announced that he would drive the Wit Hings and the recovered Ratel down to Ondangwa.

We provided the escort to this bizarre convoy. From that moment onwards I had incredible respect for the South African developed MPV's, and felt increasingly confidence about their combat capabilities.



**This image shows a Buffel MPV that has detonated a land mine and is waiting at Ongiva to be recovered back to Ondangwa in Sector 10.**