

# Richard 'Barney' Molokoane

— Dikgang Nene

RICHARD "Barney" Molokwane like many of us, joined the African National Congress during the June 16 Soweto Students uprisings. In our glorious army Umkhonto we Sizwe he belonged to the June 16 Detachment.

He was a very simple and humble comrade, gifted in many fields. Like all revolutionaries he was eager to learn more, and he did manage to learn more because he was a good listener and a good conversationalist. He was a very good footballer as well as a good guitarist. Besides the above qualities he was above all an able commander, a disciplined soldier, always vigilant and ready to defend the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. He was very proud of being a member of our people's army and devoted all his life to the ideals of our Movement and our army.

During his life in our army he was given responsibilities. Barney or Buda, as his closest friends affectionately called him, could live in both underground and aboveground conditions with ease. He always made sure that he was in good health and good physical condition. He was once an instructor in tactics. He liked the 'survival' course which he believed prepared him for any condition in the course of our struggle.

Action was his motto. He was involved in a number of heroic exploits undertaken by our combatants inside the country. Immediately after completing his course of training he was selected for a mission. He was one of those comrades who were on



*Richard 'Barney' Molokoane*

a reconnaissance mission in 1978. This unit came into contact with the enemy forces and a clash ensued. Barney's unit conducted itself exceptionally well and for the first time the boers in Zeerust saw members of the SADF humiliated. Barney was shot in the leg but he managed to outwit and outmanoeuvre the enemy during the 200km retreat to base.

From 1978 till 1985 when he died, Barney was most of the time on missions inside the country and was the commander in almost all of them. Because of his hatred for the enemy and his firm belief in the justness of our cause he led his units successfully. He participated in that daring and sophisticated sabotage of

the SASOL plant in 1980. He also commanded the unit that created history by shelling the racists' headquarters in Voortrekkerhoogte the following year, and the unit that shelled Secunda, in 1985, the latter being his last mission. He also undertook many other missions which are not mentioned here.

He met his death when they were intercepted by the enemy during their retreat after successfully shelling Secunda. Comrades Barney, Victor and Vincent fought gallantly during this encounter. This battle which took the lives of all three comrades lasted about four hours and was described by the enemy press as 'a violent shootout.'

Local residents who saw this clash describe the scene of the fight as another Lebanon. A lot of ambulances came to fetch the dead and wounded enemy soldiers! Failing to corner these three gallant and fearless fighters of MK, the enemy sought the help of helicopters which, added to their mounted machine-guns, dropped napalm on our comrades. It is obvious that many more enemy soldiers would have died if our combatants had more ammunition. So many were these dead and injured soldiers that the local people could not count them easily. November 28 will never be forgotten by the residents of this area.

The lives of Comrades Barney, Victor and Vincent did not end in vain. Their spears will be picked by hundreds of our young lions.



*Sabotage at Sasol. Damage was to the tune of R66m*