

MAVALANGA

Piet had immense passion for nature. He made it his mission to learn every tree, bird and grass species in the Kruger National Park.

As helicopter pilot, he was stand alone in his skill; he had a natural affinity for the game that they would need to work with during capture as well as culling. It was little wonder therefore that the ground team from the culling operations called him Piet 'Ottomatic' given the effective manner in which the operations were usually finished.

During census of the large game it was apparently a pleasure to have him as a pilot, given he could identify the game long before any other members of the team.

Game capture was definitely his forte. It was very close to his heart. Apart from all the game capture in the different SANParks, he took part in operations in several different African Countries, of which the two most memorable was the ones to the Ivory Coast and Malawi.

He was a fitness fanatic and jog regularly as well as playing golf and tennis. Fishing and photography were two of his hobbies especially when he was away from home. His favourite fishing spots were the Kanniedood and the Engelhard Dam. He was usually awake and in the veld long before sunrise, to capture the best photographs, many of which he sold to Custos.

If I think back as to what his best character traits were precision and discipline. Never in his 25 years service, was he ever late for a meeting.

In the beginning of 1995 he was transferred to SANParks head office with the profile of Head of Flight and Game Capture operations for National Parks.

In 2002 Piet went on pension and retired with Karin in Danabaai on the Cape South, where after a fight with cancer he passed away on the 20 November 2007.

He will be remembered as a wonderful family man, a talented pilot and his undeniably enthusiasm for nature.

(Information provided by Karin Otto through Louis Olivier)