



### **Uilissone 'Wilson' 'Timaka' Ndlovu: (1995 – 2005)**

*Wilson Ndlovu was a field ranger in the Stolznek section of the Kruger National Park. He was tragically killed by an elephant in the Malelane area on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005 at 07h30 while on patrol with fellow field ranger Raymond Nkuna.*

*Uilissone Mujovo (Wilson Ndlovu) was born in Mozambique on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1955. He started his career in the Kruger National Park, as a general worker in the Tsokwane section on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1975. In July 1988 he was employed as a field ranger at the Stolsnek Ranger section and was eventually promoted to Lance corporal on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1999. He had served 30 years of loyal service to SANParks at the time of his death.*

*The Ndlovu family has got a strong link with the park as Ndlovu's elder brother has recently retired from the Kruger National Park and his other two brothers are still working as field rangers at Pretoriuskop and Crocodile Bridge sections.*

*Wilson was known by all those who worked with him as a loyal, respectful, compassionate and exceptionally well disciplined individual, he received commendations for bravery on numerous occasions as well as being commended and awarded for his exceptional service in the workplace. At the time of his death Wilson Ndlovu had worked at all picket stations in Stolsnek, and knew the section better than anyone, and he therefore was frequently sought out by others for his advice and experience. He was known as a person with immense compassion for his fellow colleagues, and a dedicated husband and father. Wilson was survived by his two wives and eleven children.*

### **Rob Thomson, Section Ranger Stolznek**

*While Solomon Zukwa and Wilson Ndlovu were on patrol one day along the Nsikazi River, they were startled by a buffalo in thick vegetation along the riverine. The buffalo bull charged them and knocked field ranger Zukwa to the ground and was about to inflict severe damage to Zukwa, when Wilson Ndlovu stood his ground and shot and destroyed the buffalo. In so doing he saved the life of Solomon Zukwa.*

addo elephant

agulhas

augrabies falls

bontebok

golden gate highlands

karoo

kgalagadi transfrontier

knysna lake area

kruger

mapungubwe

marakele

mountain zebra

namaqua

table mountain

tankwa-karoo

tsitsikamma

|ai-|ais/richtersveld

vaalbos

west coast

wilderness



## **Report on the Fatal Elephant Trampling of L/Cpl Wilson Ndlovu (Personal Number 750029) stationed at Stolznek in the Kruger National Park by Bruce Leslie acting Regional Ranger: Southern Region**

*At approximately 07h30 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005 while on patrol with Raymond Nkuna L/Cpl Wilson Ndlovu was fatally trampled by an elephant cow approximately 2 km North East of Shirombeni picket on the Stolznek Section.*

*The Field Rangers had left the picket earlier in the morning to investigate a reported Black Rhino carcass in the vicinity of Nyaka stream on the section. The carcass had been discovered by the previous days patrol. The carcass was old, but the Field Rangers wanted to return to locate the rhino's horns as they could not find them the day before. On route along the Madlabantu 4x4 trail on bicycles to the Black Rhino carcass the Field Rangers obviously came into an unexpected close contact with a breeding herd of elephant, on both sides of the 4x4 route. The terrain in the area is dominated by dense stands of Silver Cluster Leaf and Marula trees with tall thatching grass reaching above one's head.*

*According to Raymond Nkuna an elephant cow chased Wilson and a second elephant charged him. Both men then fled in different directions in order to escape and evade the charging elephants. Raymond was able to escape and evade detection by the elephant and immediately reported the incident to Rob Thomson. After reconstructing the scene by walking the area with Rob Thomson and Don English and following the spoor it was evident that Wilson had run approximately 60 meters before he turned to face the charging elephant. He fired a single shot at the elephant cow and at this point Wilson's rifle had a stoppage. The rifle was therefore not able to extract the empty cartridge and therefore could not reload automatically. Due to the speed and close proximity of the charging elephant Wilson did not have enough time to clear the stoppage in order to continue shooting. It was at this point that the elephant trampled Wilson repeatedly, fatally killing him.*

*Suspecting that Wilson had wounded an elephant cow we flew the area in the afternoon in the SANParks helicopter. The location where Wilson was killed was clearly visible from the air. The flight path of the elephant-breeding herd from the scene was also very clear from the air.*

addo elephant

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golden gate highlands

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*We were able to follow this spoor through the grass from the helicopter and located splinter groups of the elephant breeding herd in the immediate vicinity due east of Shirombeni picket.*

addo elephant

*We inspected each elephant cow that we managed to see from the air in order to identify any possible sign, which might indicate to us that the animal was wounded or responsible for the fatal trampling. We located one elephant cow with dark stains on the head and ear but could not be sure whether or not this animal was responsible and therefore did not destroy any of the elephant we located.*

agulhas

augrabies falls

bontebok

*Of particular interest was a young elephant calf, which had been recently born and was no more than a few hours old as it could not walk or even stand on its feet. We suspect that this calf was born during the course of the day after the incident had taken place.*

golden gate highlands

karoo

kgalagadi transfrontier

### **African Eye News Service: Story by Riot Hlatshwayo, Photo's by Zenzele Kuhlase/aens**

knysna lake area

*Screams shattered the night "Elephant! Elephant!" Maggie Ndlovu woke up in terror thinking a wild jumbo was outside their hut. The she realized it just her husband having a bad dream... Wilson Ndlovu worked as a game ranger in the Kruger National Park and for several nights he'd have nightmares about murderous elephants. "They were just dreams," says Maggie. "That's what I told him when I tried to comfort him." She shakes her head sadly. "I didn't know his nightmare would become real." She's wearing the black mourning of a widow because her beloved husband was later trampled to death by an elephant. He was killed while on a routine bicycle patrol in the Stolznek area near Pretoriuskop. Maggie and Wilson's senior wife, Girly, says they always knew that although Wilson loved his job it was risky. He often entertained the children of Huntington village, near the world famous game reserve's Kruger Gate, with tales of the bush. "The older children would laugh when he told them of a nasty experience, like the day he met a pride of lions face to face," says Girly. Wilson described how he had to scramble up a tree as fast as lightning to save his skin. "He said the lions seemed very hungry and possibly failed to catch prey that day, so they would eat anything – even a human being." Both women say the stories made them uneasy.*

kruger

mapungubwe

marakele

mountain zebra

namaqua

table mountain

tankwa-karoo

tsitsikamma

|ai-|ais/richtersveld

vaalbos

*But Wilson didn't know any other way of life. He followed in the footsteps of his three older brothers who also worked in the Kruger National Park. "His death was a real disaster, but we cannot hold it against the animals," says Wilson's brother, Joseph. "Animals don't think like human beings."*

west coast

wilderness



*Wilson's oldest brother, Judas, agrees. Girl and Maggie have turned to the 61-year-old for counsel and he says the animals aren't to blame. I am an old man and have seen many things happening in this world," he says. "They shouldn't start any war against animals. I teach them that there is a time for everything including death." He says the children also need to realise that the animals are not at fault because the children may grow up to work in the park one day. "How can an elephant pre-plan to kill someone? It was God's plan that Wilson die that way," he explains.*

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