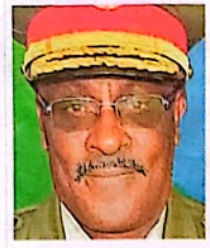
The original NRA bush war fighters

In 1981, Yoweri Museveni launched the first military onslaught against the second Milton Obote regime at Kabamba Military Barracks. The protracted war was to last until January 26, 1986, when the guerilla outfit, the National Resistance Army, overran Kampala, and overthrew the military junta led by Gen Tito Okello Lutwa. In this piece, we offer a sneak peek into the fate of some of the key bush war fighters, both deceased and alive.

BY DERRICK WANDERA & BENSON TUMUSIIME



Maj Gen Pecos Kutesa (Deceased)



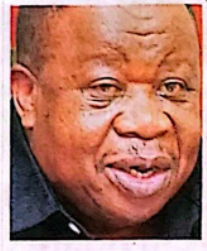
Gen Yoweri Museveni



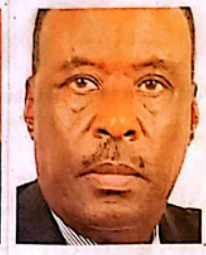
Gen David Sejusa



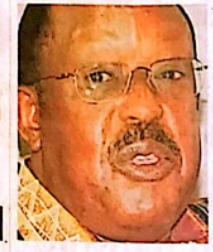
Gen Elly Tumwine (Deceased)



Maj Gen Kahinda Otafiire



Col (rtd) Fred Mwesigye



Eriya Kategeya (Deceased)



Maj Gen Fred Rwigyema (Deceased)

Gen (rtd) Yoweri Museveni

He is President of Uganda and Commander-in-Chief, a position he has held since the guerrilla movement he founded, took power on January 26, 1986. Gen Museveni retired from active military service in 2003, famously announcing he was ditching the uniform (military fatigue) for the business suit to become a civilian President.

Museveni started efforts to build an army in the early 1970s, getting basic training in the jungles of Mozambique under Frelimo while still a student at the University of Dar es Salam.

He recruited most of the people who made the initial ranks of the Fronasa force which was later to transform into the National Resistance Army and its political wing, the National Resistance Movement.

Brig (Honorary) Eriya Kategeya (Deceased)

Kategaya first met President Museveni at Kyamate Primary School in Ntungamo. Kategaya, a close confidant of Museveni, was probably one of the most frequently mentioned individuals in the war preparations of the 1970s as well as the 1980s.

On February 6, 1988 during the second Tarehe Sita celebrations, he was given the honorary rank of Brigadier.

Capt. William 'Black' Mwesigwa (Deceased)

Black Mwesigwa met Museveni at Mbarara High School where they started a discussion group that was years later to mutate into the revolutionary struggle that eventually formed the core of today's government and army.

He, however, died early in the struggle. On page 50 of *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, authored by Museveni, he says Black Mwesigwa was one of the people he met days after Amin took over power. Museveni had fled to Tanzania a day after the Idi Amin coup but returned days later to set up an underground Movement.

He describes Mwesigwa as an economist.

"We had met at Mbarara High School. Mwesigwa was nicknamed "Black" because he was very dark-skinned, but his real name was William. He was quiet and mild-mannered, he was also from a cattle keeping background and his parents were born-again Christians. He was killed during the failed first attack on Mbarara Barracks around 1973.

On page 16 of the same book, Museveni lists the other members of the "core" as Martin Mwesiga, Valeriano Rwaheru and Eriya Kategaya.

Capt Valeriano Rwaheru (Deceased)

Also a high school colleague of Museveni, Rwaheru is described as "short and stocky from a farming background and a Roman Catholic" who was "quiet but noticeably courageous". Rwaheru died in the early years of the struggle after a clandestine meeting at Kyambogo in the house of Levi Karuhanga. Rwaheru and James Karuhanga had remained in the house after the meeting when Amin soldiers stormed it.

While Karuhanga remained talking to them, Rwaheru is said to have hidden in a bedroom from where he was able to lob two grenades, killing 11 soldiers, but was killed by the third which exploded before he could throw it. Karuhanga was arrested and taken alive and executed later in Mbarara.

Capt Martin Mwesiga (Deceased)

Martin Mwesiga was a childhood friend of Museveni whom he met at the age of nine. He was killed in Mbale after they were cornered by government soldiers in the house of Maumbe Mukhwana; House No 49 Maluku Housing Estate.

According to the President's account, disguised as students, they had travelled to Mbale to try and establish a camp on Mount Elgon but also to warn their team there, especially Mukhwana. While Museveni fled by jumping over a hedge, Mwesiga and Mpima did not and were killed.

Lt Malibo Abwooli (Deceased)

He also belongs to the revolutionary group of the early 1970s. He was a victim of the public executions in March 1973 when government soldiers arrested suspected dissidents and publicly executed them in their home towns. Malibo was arrested in a café in Kampala and executed in Fort Portal. A monument in his honour stands at the New Taxi Park in downtown Fort Portal off a road also named after him.

Maj Gen Kahinda Otafiire

He is the minister for Internal Affairs well as Member of Parliament representing Ruhinda Constituency in Mitooma District. He first made contact with President Museveni in 1976. He was a member of Fronasa. When Amin was overthrown, Otafiire advised Museveni to hide guns in case they were to fight the UNLA government. Museveni refused but regretted why he didn't heed Otafiire's advice.

Maj Gen Gisa Fred Rwigyema (Deceased)

A National Resistance Army fighter of Rwandan origin, Fred Rwigyema was killed on the first day of the Banyarwanda refugees attack on Rwanda in October 1990. He was the first commander of the Rwanda Patriotic Front, mainly comprised of former Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Uganda who pushed for a return to their homeland.

In the National Resistance Army, he commanded the Mondlane force which operated in the Kalasa and Makulubita area in the early days of the guerrilla war.

Gen (rtd) Caleb Akandwanaho, alias Salim Saleh

Gen Saleh is the young brother of President Museveni and hailed as one of the most fearless commanders of the bush war. He retired from the military and briefly served as an army MP, a minister and presidential advisor on military affairs.

He is the current chief coordinator of Operation Wealth Creation an initiative to fight poverty among war veterans and former soldiers.

Lt Gen (rtd) Ivan Koreta

Born in Mbarara in 1964, R... trained in the Frelimo camp... zambique while still a teen... participated in the war that r... Idi Amin from power in 1979. H... er joined Museveni in the 1981-... war that removed the Obote re... He commanded the 13th Batt... that guarded the Kampala-Gulu ... way. He later served as chairman ... General Court Martial in 2007. In ... he was named an ambassador and ... er on also represented the army in the ... liament.

Currently, Lt Gen Koreta is the chai... person of the Industrial Research ... tute Board of Directors, which is respo... sible for restoring order and overs... at the troubled parastatal.

Lt Col Sam Magara (Deceased)

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Magara drove the pick-up truck wh... Museveni as they went to attack K... bamba on February 6, the day Kabi... ba was attacked, marking the start ... the war.

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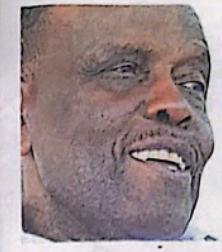
CORRECTION

Maj Gen Felix Busizoori is the commander of the UPDF 4th Infantry Division, while Maj Geo Keith Katungi is the commander of the 5th Infantry Division, contrary to what we published in our Thursday, February 5 edition in a story titled "Is Muhoozi-Baryomunsi feud more than meets the eyes?"

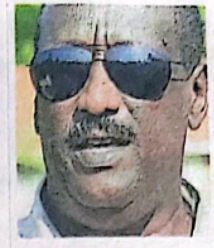
-Editor.

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1981 - 1986



Maj Gen (rtd) Matayo Kyaligonza



Gen (rtd) Caleb Akandwanaho

A former teacher of Fine Art, Tumwine was among the original 27 armed men who attacked Kabamba. He represented the army in Parliament and headed the medal awards committee. He first joined Museveni in 1978 to fight against Idi Amin. In 1981, he fired t... rst bullet at the attack on Kabamba. In 1984, he succeeded Sam Magara as army commander until 1987 when he handed over to Salim Saleh. He suffered grave injuries in the war, leading to loss of an eye.

Brig (rtd) Julius Chihandae

Brig Chihandae is reputed to be one of the fiercest fighters of the NRA struggle. He is deployed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the ambassador of Uganda to the Republic of Angola.

He joined Museveni in the late 1970s and participated in the final push to overthrow Adi Amin after which he was integrated into the Uganda National Liberation Army. He was later sent to cadet training in Munduli, Tanzania.

He was one of the 27 armed attackers of Kabamba barracks on the day the war was launched with a specific mission to destroy the barracks' communication system. He was also the first fighter to be injured in the war. He was commander of the 9th Battalion.

Maj Gen Pecos Kutesa (Deceased)

He was the head of doctrine in the Uganda People's Defence Forces by the time he died. Kutesa was one of a few officers and political actors of the liberation war to document his experiences in the book, "*Uganda's Revolution 1979-1986*.

The others are Yoweri Museveni, Eriya Kategaya, Matayo Kyaligonza and the late Sam Njuba. Kutesa also trained in Munduli with Elly Tumwine, Mugabi and Napoleoon Rutambika, among others.

Kutesa was one of the first bodyguards of President Museveni crossing with him several times on the treacherous Lake Victoria to Kenya. He was later commander of the 1st Battalion. In *How I saw It*, Kutesa noted the difference in experiences of combatants in the bush and their counterparts on the political wing. He noted how Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi asked him to first wash his car when he asked for money to buy cigarettes during a visit to Nairobi with Museveni.

Col (rtd) Fred Mwesigye

He is currently serving as the High Commissioner of Uganda to Tanzania. Mr Mwesigye is a former MP for Nyabushozi and previously headed the National Enterprise Corporation (NEC), the business arm of the UPDF. He was also one of the original men who attacked Kabamba on February 6, 1981.

Lt. Joy Mirembe (Deceased)

The only woman combatant among the 100, she died in child birth during the war. Commander Mirembe together with Oliver Zizinga, Gertrude Njuba and Brig Proscovia Nalweyiso were some of the few and very first women to join the bush war.

Gen David Sejusa Tinyefuza (Retired)

He was declared a deserter after fleeing the country to self-imposed exile. His troubles started after he authored a memo instructing the director general Internal Security Organisation to investigate claims of assassination plots against some individuals he alleged were viewed as opposed to a succession plan that would see President Museveni succeeded by his son, then-Brig Muhoozi Kainerugaba.

The lawyer, who was coordinator of intelligence agencies, courted controversy right from the bush days. A fierce fighter, his first disagreement was over a decision to send women companions of fighters out of the bush, he disagreed when some women were exempted.

After capturing power, he disagreed with Museveni over the latter's refusal to restore the Obugabe of Ankole when other areas had their kings restored and recognised.

He sued the army, seeking to be allowed to retire in a famous case in 1995. He commanded some brutal wars especially in the north after the fall of Kampala.

He was the unfortunate one, said ex-army commander Elly Tumwine.

Maj Gen (rtd) Matayo Kyaligonza

He was Uganda's ambassador to Burundi. He also documented his experiences in a book, *Agony of Power*. During the bush war, Kyaligonza commanded the urban fighter unit that operated within and around Kampala with a base in Namugongo. One of the most notable experiences of his bush war days was to drive a car with guns past a roadblock of government soldiers and revealing the cargo he was carrying when asked. The soldiers waved him on not knowing he was a rebel.

Maj Emmy Ekyaruhanga (Deceased)

He joined the struggle early together with Matayo Kyaligonza and Johnson Ndahura.

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