

Incoming From Africa...

Chris Matlock continues chasing after the latest happenings in Africa, and has been covering a lot of the unrest in Zaire/Rwanda.

Here's the latest information from him, received last week!

"Just got back from Rwanda last night. It has been a busy 17 day stretch. Started off in Bukavu, Zaire the middle of last month. Was there for about a week before it became too dangerous and I left last Monday. I got out of Bukavu on a Belgian evac flight to Entebbe, Uganda. Spent one night in Uganda before flying back to Nairobi picking up some more gear and two CNN guys out of London, then leaving for Rwanda two hours after I arrived at the office. My clothes were still in Bukavu, but I managed to get them to Kigali three days later.

My first day in Gisenyi (opposite Goma, Zaire) we were shooting near the border and got caught in a Rwanda/Zaire crossfire of artillery and mortars. The Zairians were firing mortars into Rwandan positions about 500 metres ahead of us and the Rwandans were sending artillery into Zaire from their cannons placed about 1km behind us. We put on our flak jackets and helmets and sat beside a wall for about 20 minutes until it was over. Nothing came too near us but we didn't want to drive out of the area in case our car was seen as a target.

When we arrived at the hotel an hour later, the Zairians dropped a few mortars right into the centre of town killing one or two people. That started a two-hour panic that blocked the streets until people calmed down.

For relaxation at the hotel that day, we would go down to the beach with a beer, and our cameras, and watch the Rwandan speed boats with big machine guns make runs into Zairian waters and shoot at their positions (we were about 3 or 4 kms away).

The next day about twenty of us walked across the border into Goma to see what was happening. We got about one km down the main road then stopped for 15 minutes. There was the occasional mortar, grenade and machine gun fire about 2 km away. The others decided to continue, but I turned back to the border because it didn't feel right. About 20 minutes later some of them got caught in a crossfire between the rebels and Zairians. A Swedish cameraman got shot in the leg when he ran around a corner to avoid a grenade, and startled a rebel.

Goma has been quiet since then and the border was closed for three days. The rebels won and let the media back in on Tuesday so we saw a lot of looting and toured the hospital, where they were out of most supplies. Some operations were done with very little anaesthetic."

"Worked with Christian Amanpour, the high-priced CNN reporter. Very nice. Very business-like. Don't like her hair. She can write a good story very quickly though.

Came home (to Nairobi) to find neither car I use will start. Firlie from our office drove me home after we fixed her flat tire. Power outage early this morning.

Yep, I'm back in Nairobi!!!!"

- Chris Matlock



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Celebrating Birthdays In The Next Two Weeks...

Alex Spiridonov has his birthday on November 26th,
and Paul Smith will be celebrating on the 28th.
Dave Wood and Mike Yaworski share
December 1st as their big day!

& Anniversaries....

Oops....I forgot Kathy Fedy who marked 18 years on
November 20th! Sorry Kathy!

November 25 - Fred Martinovic - 15 years

November 27 - John Smith - 24 years

December 1 - Peter Graham - 21 years

December 1 - Ron Molland - 16 years

December 3 - Randy Ricketts - 17 years

December 3 - Lance Kagel - 2 years



Welcome Shelley Ayres!

Shelley will be joining
Action News as a part-time
writer.

She is a graduate of the
University of Western
Ontario, and has spent some
time working in the CTV
newsroom in Toronto.

Excellent Advice

Before you speak, listen.
Before you write, think.
Before you spend, earn.
Before you invest, investigate.
Before you criticize, wait.
Before you pray, forgive.
Before you quit, try.
Before you retire, save.
Before you die, give.

- submitted by Henning