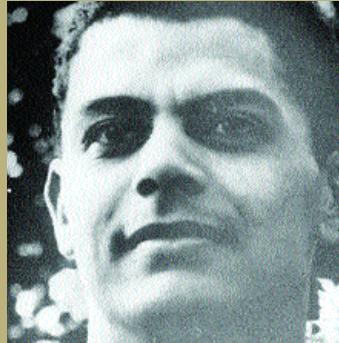


Basil February (1943 – 1968)

MENDI DECORATION FOR BRAVERY IN GOLD (POSTHUMOUS)



**AWARDED TO
BASIL FEBRUARY
FOR BRAVERY AND
VALOUR IN THE FACE OF
OVERWHELMING ODDS,
AND FOR SACRIFICING HIS
LIFE FOR HIS COMRADES
AND IN THE CAUSE OF
JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND
DEMOCRACY**

Basil February was born in Cape Town in 1943 and matriculated from Trafalgar High School in 1960 with five distinctions. Although he wished to study law at the University of Cape Town (UCT), his application was refused by the then Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, BJ Voster.

He subsequently enrolled at UCT's medical school, but being more absorbed in political struggle, dropped out the following year.

February joined the South African Coloured People's Congress (SACPO) in 1963. At a time when public meetings were banned, February and his dear comrade James April painted political graffiti to communicate their message. These activities soon landed him in trouble with the law.

In 1964, February joined Umkhonto we Sizwe. Fearing that knowledge of his plans to skip the country might put family and friends in great danger, he disappeared without bidding his family and friends goodbye. They would never see him alive again.

He secretly left Cape Town and made his way to Botswana and later underwent training in guerrilla warfare in other African countries and in Czechoslovakia. As a soldier, February stood out for his leadership qualities. He was a gifted intellectual and writer and contributed many articles to *Dawn*, the Umkhonto we Sizwe journal.

After training, February was sent back to South Africa to lead a guerrilla unit. The unit was ambushed in southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) in 1968 while en route to South Africa. February put up a heroic defence against overwhelming odds to protect his comrades and give them time to escape.

Basil February sacrificed his own life to save his comrades and in so doing became one of the first young South Africans to die in the course of the armed struggle.