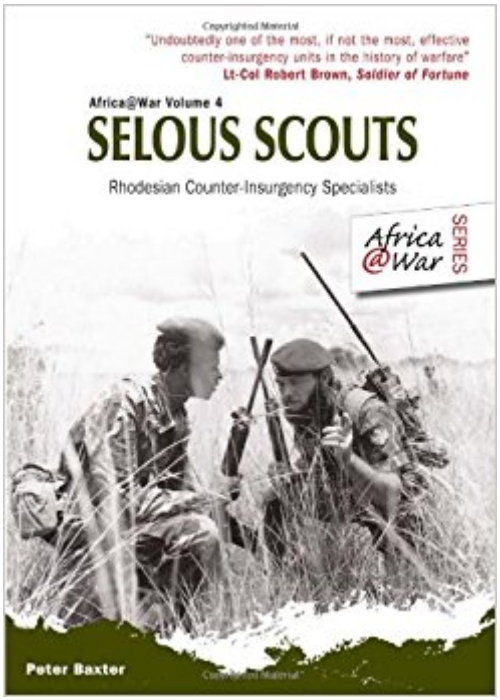
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Selous Scouts: Rhodesian Counter-Insurgency Specialists (Africa @ War Series)



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Synopsis

"Its members consisted of some of the finest guerrilla-fighting men in the western world, unconventional in many ways, disregardful of parade-ground discipline, unorthodox in their dress, yet a force so tightly knit in the face of danger that those who knew anything about them could only marvel" - The Citizen. Formed in 1973 by the legendary Lieutenant-Colonel Ron Reid-Daly at the behest of Rhodesian military supremo General Peter Walls, the Selous Scouts were to write their name into the annals of military history as one of the finest counterinsurgency units of all time, through their innovative pseudo-guerrilla tactics, brilliant reconnaissance operations into Zambia and Botswana and daring flying-column raids into Mozambique. Feared and hated by the liberation movements ZIPRA and ZANLA, the Scouts wreaked untold havoc and destruction on their Soviet- and Chinese-backed enemies, accounting for 68% of guerrilla casualties within Rhodesia alone during the bitter bush war of the 1970s. Uniquely ahead of its time, the regimen - a brotherhood of men that traversed cultural and racial barriers; their Shona motto was 'Pamwe Chete' (together only) - was to produce the type of soldier that earned for the unit one Grand Cross of Valour, nine Silver Crosses and 22 Bronze Crosses of Rhodesia.

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Customer Reviews

"Undoubtedly one of the most, if not the most, effective counter-insurgency units in the history of warfare" (")"Africa@War is a ground-breaking series concept, studying AfricaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s conflicts and military players in an informative and entertaining manner, examining some of the lesser-known

campaigns and shedding new light on some of the better-known operations ... Both titles are great models of what the combination of authors and publishers can produce by way of useable case studies for the market place in a concise illustrated format. They are recommended as professional military education references." (Charles D. Melson, Chief Historian, U.S. Marine Corps)"Each of the books in this series is a well-documented and researched synopsis of the events that they are focused upon. They layouts and presentation are logical and of a very high quality ... As an introduction to this field of operation, this series is outstanding. A definite asset for those wishing to improve their knowledge and understanding of the development of successful, multi-faceted doctrine in the fight against insurgent/assymetric war." (Major Chris Buckham, Royal Canadian Air Force)

Peter Baxter is an author, amateur historian and African field, mountain and heritage travel guide. Born in Kenya, Peter has lived and travelled over much of southern and central Africa. He was educated in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), leaving the country after independence for an extended bout of travel before returning in 1989. Since then he has guided in all the major mountain ranges south of the equator, helping develop the concept of sustainable travel, and the touring of battlefield and heritage sites in East Africa. Peter lives in the United States, working on the marketing of African heritage travel as well as a variety of book projects. His interests include British Imperial history in Africa and the East Africa campaign of the First World War in particular. He is married with three children.

Let me start by saying that I have read every book publish about the Selous Scouts (or had coverage of the Selous Scouts), and this book rates at the top of the list. This is for a few reasons. The first is that this book is affordable for all to read about this deadly and world renowned elite force. Most books on the Selous Scouts are out of print and/or very expensive to obtain, for that matter most Rhodesian Bush War books are generally all very expensive to obtain. For one they are printed overseas and shipping is also very, very high. It is not uncommon for a book with shipping to be over eighty dollars which if you are not a collector would be ridicules to spend. So for me this book rates high just for this reason.As for as content this book I will briefly hit some salient points;The contents;ForewordPrelude - A Brief History of War in Rhodesia. This chapter covers briefly conflict from settlement to the fall of Rhodesia in 1980. As well, as the coverage of Rhodesian participation in WWII with the SAS/LRDG and Malaya.Chapter One - The Formation of the Selous Scouts. This is an interesting chapter covering the evolution of the formation of the Selous Scouts

from early beginning with nucleus of Special Air Service (SAS) troops and British South African Police (BSAP) experimenting with pseudo methods. This chapter clearly explains the command relationship between the Army, BSAP and Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), explaining the complicated but streamlined joint organization of the scouts. Finally it covers the initial selection and assessment process developed to get "into" the scouts.Chapter Two - Operations Commence. Covers in detail the merging of FireForce operations with Selous Scout pseudo teams acting as "pathfinders" for the Rhodesian Light Infantry (Commando0 (RLI) direct action elements to kill and capture terrorist. As well this section elaborates on the "turning" of terrorist for pseudo-operations.Chapter Three - External Operations - Terrorizing the Terrorist. This chapter does an excellent job at explaining the evolution of external operations by the Selous Scouts flying columns, as well it gives a brief overview of all the major external operations.Chapter Four - Intelligence and the Reconnaissance Troop. Covers the importance of intelligence, to support pseudo-operations as the techniques became known and semi-compromised by the BSAP and terrorist. The second half is on the formation and operational employment of the Recce Troop, in particularly the employment of small team and singleton recce operators for external missions.Chapter Five - The Selous Scouts Spies. Interesting look at the use of undercover Selous Scout agents externally in bordering countries for advance recce missions, intelligence collection, direct action and assassination.Chapter Six - The Mud Begins to Stick. This chapter covers the beginning of the end of the Selous Scouts, due to rivalry and service in-fighting; ultimately covering up to Reid-Daly’s retirement and the disbandment of the scouts. Also covers a lot of the allegations of illegal activities supposable conducted by the Selous Scouts to include chemical warfare and poaching.Chapter Seven - Operation Miracle. This chapter covers some of the major operations up to "Miracle

Review: Selous Scouts: Rhodesian Counter-Insurgency Specialists Peter BaxterSelous Scouts by Peter Baxter is a bit of legendary history of a regiment in the Rhodesian military in the last years of White Rhodesia. This unit was set up to be a ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“pseudoÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• guerrilla unit and an intelligence unit 1973 - 1980. 1980 was the end of white rule in Rhodesia. They would ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“turnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• captured guerrillas from the Black Nationalism to the Rhodesian side by pointing out their three options, immediate execution, to trail and 99% chance of being hung, or turning. They would then send these men back into the battle zones and infiltration zones as ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“pseudo guerrillas.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• There they would gather information and call in air and ground strikes on the infiltrators. Several sources show that over 68% of the killed

infiltrating guerrillas in their period were killed by the Selous Scouts (over 1200 to about 400 dead).I found the book a bit hard to understand at first, due to my confusion of which war was being discussed, and the use of terms unfamiliar to me like pseudo counter intelligence and pseudo guerrilla. After about 10% of the book, it became clear. The book is well written. The story well told with lots of pictures of main players and action. There is lots of action. As near as I can tell, while the book is about White Rhodesian military, and discusses the racism of the time and place, it has little other bias. The Selous Scouts contained about 60-70% Blacks and the only commissioned Black officers in the Rhodesian Military. The book is not negative to Blacks and in fact honors them, naming and picturing them as active, nearly equal members of the Selous Scouts.The interaction of the commander (Ron Reid-Daly), his Commander and friend Gen. Wall, and the remainder of the Rhodesian military command is well told. Reid-Daly was not from the honored military academies (Sandhurst) but rose through the ranks. Thus he was resented by the true bloods of the Rhodesian military. Reid-Daly also did lots of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“lateralÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• thinking and out of the box thinking. Selous Scouts had some special privileges and were frequently given frozen, other unit free zones. Thus he had to spend lots of time justifying his unit and their actions to the Rhodesian Military Commanders.Many of the exploits of the Selous Scouts are described in some detail, both internal and external to Rhodesia, including the failed assassinations of the Black leaders of the ZANA and ZANLA, both movements of Black nationalism in Rhodesia.The author, Peter Baxter is White and was born in Kenya and educated in Zambia. He lived through the early parts of the Black Nationalism in Africa. Once Africa became untenable for Whites, he moved to England and then the United States, where he now lives. He is currently an active guide of many African trips, both historical and military, with several advertised on his website. On his website are several downloadable articles on African History and lore. He is an amateur historian who has written several other books on military history of White Africa.I wondered about accuracy. I checked Wikipedia and found that their article paralleled this book very closely. Their article references primarily Reid-Daly's book ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Pamwe Chete: The Legend of the Selous Scouts.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (Reid-Daly's book is available for over $600 dollars for a hardbound copy on ABEBooks) It does not reference this book. The references in this book are a wide mix, including Reid-Daly's book. Helion and Company Ltd, the publisher, a British Publishing house specializing in Military History, lists lots of small ebooks on mainly European and African military history. 30 South, the associate publisher, is a South African publishing company which lists many small ebooks on African military history, geology and travel, with an emphasis on memoirs. Thus, this book appears to tell the story accurately.

I knew of the tracking skills of the Selous Scouts and was hoping to learn more details of their experiences in the field. This book documents the orgainization of the unit and its leadership. It gives the reader an overview of the operational capabilities of the Scouts. It also discusses the successful intergration of black and white operators in the unit. The Scouts were very successful in cross border counterinsurgency operations and developed the ability to turn captured guerillas into support troops.

This is an affordable option for anybody wanting to get an insight into this elite fighting force, the masters of pseudo-operations. I collect Rhodesian Bush War books and they are very difficult to get hold of, particularly those on the Selous Scouts. Even for those die-hard collectors, this should be a part of your collection.

Very interesting portrayal of the members of the Best counterinsurgency group in modern history. What so few could cause so great a problem for insurgency was truly amazing. I actually had the pleasure of meeting a former member of the Scouts. Great man.

I originally was looking for Reid-Daly's book but it is not available in a Kindle edition. This book is a good first read on the subject of Selous Scouts and their contributions to save their country. Interesting, informative, enlightening. This book contains several good references to other published works to further my education on the subject. It also contained many photographs throughout.

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