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Weep for Africa: A Rhodesian Light Infantry Paratrooper's Farewell to Innocence

Jeremy Hall

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Jeremy Hall’s childhood in the white-ruled apartheid South Africa of the 1950s and ’60s was ostensibly idyllic: growing up in the farming areas of Natal, he had free rein to pander to his keen exploratory mind, yet niggling away was entrenched racism and interracial hatred. Closeted in the hallowed halls of an English-speaking high school, the revelation of the real world that followed – a world of township unrest, Afrikaner politicians issuing dire warnings of the red and black hordes massing on the borders – exploded into Hall’s psyche with his national-service call-up into the South African Defense Force (SADF), where he encountered the institutionalized hatred of the Afrikaner hierarchy for the English-speaking recruits, the rowe, or ‘scabs’. Disillusioned and unsettled, following his SADF conscription, Hall found himself in 1976 signing on for three years with 2 Commando The Rhodesian Light Infantry as the bush war in that country erupted from a simmering, low-key insurgency into full-blown war. As a paratrooper with this crack airborne unit, he was to see continual combat on Fireforce operations and cross-border raids into Zambia and Mozambique, such as Operation Dingo, the 1977 Rhodesian attack on ZANLA’s Chimoio base.

REVIEWS

"A loner by nature, his sensitive appreciation of his surroundings is evident in his writing, in spite of often hostile circumstances. From his Natal-based almost colonial lifestyle through his many life-changing experiences in Africa, he has been able to stand back, to remember, to consider and to set down in writing a host of these memories – and to set aside others. This is an extremely well written book that ‘tells it like it is’ and as a result it is difficult to put down and impossible to forget."
Shelagh Nation

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Corey Smith:

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