



Fireforce: One Man's War in The Rhodesian Light Infantry

Chris Cocks

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The horror of guerrilla warfare in Africa Fireforce is the compelling, brutal but true account of Chris Cocks's service in 3 Commando, The Rhodesian Light Infantry, during Zimbabwe's bitter civil war of the '70s—a war that came to be known almost innocuously as 'the bush war'. 'Fireforce', a tactic of total airborne envelopment, was developed and perfected by the RLI, together with the Selous Scouts and the Rhodesian Air Force. Fireforce became the principal strike weapon of the beleaguered Rhodesian forces in their struggle against the overwhelming tide of the Communist-trained and -equipped ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas. The combat strain on a fighting soldier was almost unbelievable, for the Rhodesians, who were always desperately short of ground troops, were sometimes obliged to parachute the same men into action into as many as three enemy contacts a day. While estimates of enemy casualties vary, there seems little doubt that the RLI accounted for at least 12,000 ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas—but not without cost. Fireforce is not for the squeamish. Although it has been written with unforgettable pathos and humour, it tells of face-to-face combat in the bush and death at point-blank range. It is a book which does nothing to glorify or glamorize war, for as Chris Cocks found at such a young age, war is merely a catalogue of suffering, destruction and death. Fireforce has been described by critics as being to the Rhodesian War what All Quiet On The Western Front was to World War I and Dispatches was to Vietnam. Read it ... it will be an experience you never forget. Chris Cocks lives in Johannesburg. This is the fourth edition of Fireforce. He is a partner in the South African Publishing house, 30° South Publishers. Cocks is also the author of Out of Action and co-author of The Saints—The Rhodesian Light Infantry.

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