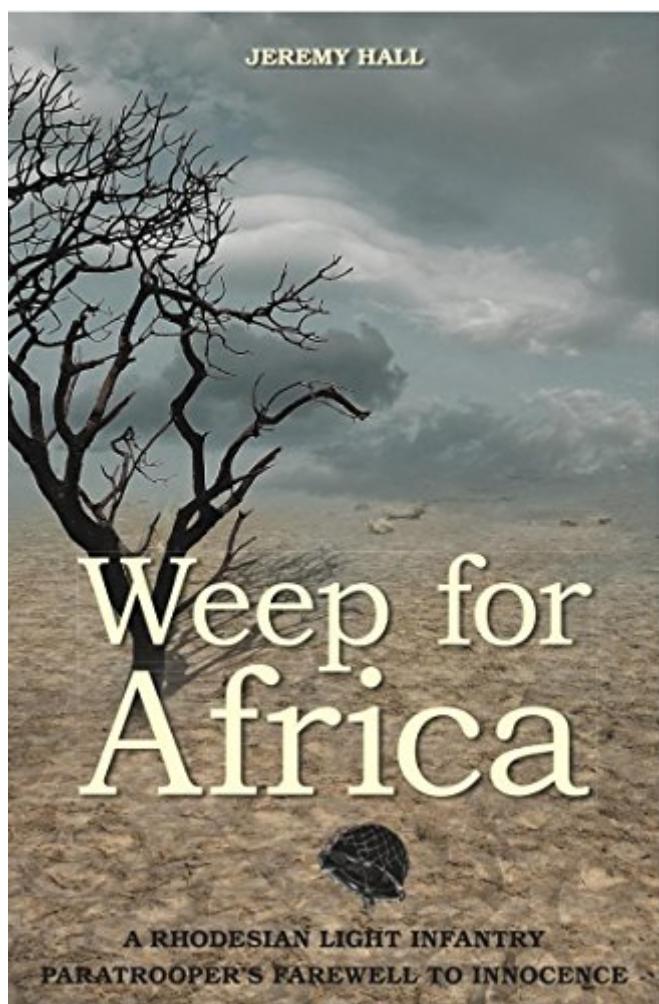


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Weep For Africa: A Rhodesian Light Infantry Paratrooper's Farewell To Innocence



Synopsis

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 'escabs'. 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.

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Customer Reviews

An alive and vital book from start to finish, written in a style that gives great immediacy to every situation; one felt almost there during the contacts with the enemy and could 'smell it'; sensual descriptions and quite fascinating the childhood growing up in Natal. Not many people write about that - I got a sense of his family life ... but most of all the incredible danger, adrenaline and camaraderie of serving in the Rhodesian Army's premiere commando killing machine, Fire Force. It was an amazing fighting unit - not everything falls into place like it does in the movies: an incident of friendly fire and being ordered by a petulant, self-serving officer on a suicide run stand out. And peace time in South Africa would be a war zone anywhere else. I intended to read this incredibly honest and sincere piece of work in a week but took little more than a day. The style of writing is unusual and will appeal to those who appreciate the nuances of the English language.

A deep and emotionally charged autobiographical work, written with honesty and sprinklings of humor (and a few side splitting stories), 'Weep For Africa' takes us through the early childhood and adolescence of its author, growing up in apartheid South Africa, through his conscription into the South African Defense Force, and onto his three year stint in the Rhodesian bush war. Well written and flowing easily, this book will both entertain and enlighten its readers. Jeremy Hall provides a first-hand account of this controversial chapter in the regions history, the harsh realities of war and the psychological aftermath. These are whispers of the conscience that cannot be fully and neatly stored away in a corner of the mind and forgotten forever. A courageous first work, by an author who I'm sure will be putting pen to paper again.

A very entertaining, insightful and truthful autobiography. I was enthralled by Mr. Hall's style of writing and although I had a very similar, though poorer, upbringing in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and served with the RLI, I found many of his insights very thought provoking and, in hindsight, extremely relevant. Two events in particular I have a hard time believing and one would not have 'got away' with them in the RLI I knew. I couldn't put the book down and was disappointed when the read was finished.

Every young man it seems must prove something to himself or fill some unknown but nagging void. So it seems for Mr Hall, though in a way that most would consider "trying circumstances".....war.

What I saw was a coming of age story, but one that included not just growth and maturity but tragedy and horror. While the man Mr Hall seems to not regret his boyhood decision to go to war, his psyche continues to wrestle with it. If I could get my teenage sons to read this book as a cautionary tale, I would, but alas, they too seem on the trajectory to figure it out themselves.

Excellent read, covering the war years in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia exceptionally well through the eyes of a junior combatant. The author's decision to join the RLI, given that he was South African (Natal to boot) and uninvolved, was never adequately revealed. Given the negative repercussions suffered by him long after the event and the fact that he never returned to Zimbabwe makes it all the more unfortunate/sad/strange.

Satisfied my new found interest in the Rhodesian War. Also a great personal story.

Whilst I don't consider it great literature it had particular significance for me having grown up in similar circumstances and being familiar with the locations in the book. I don't know how much appeal it will have for the international readership other than those who enjoy Africana.

Always enjoyed books about the Bush war. This did not disappoint at all. I especially liked the stories he told about his life prior to his service in Rhodesia. I wish you the best Mr Hall and thank you for your service all those years ago.

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