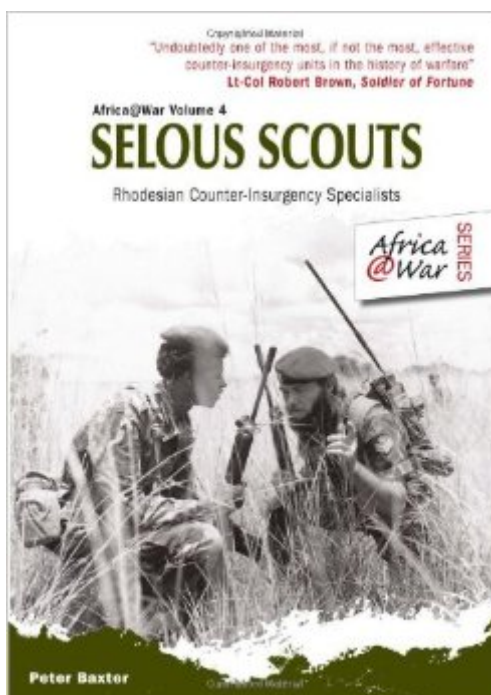


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# Selous Scouts: Rhodesian Counter-Insurgency Specialists (Africa @ War Series)



## 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.

REVIEWS "Undoubtedly one of the most, if not the most, effective counter-insurgency units in the history of warfare" Lt-Col Robert Brown, Soldier of Fortune magazine

"Africa@War is a ground-breaking series concept, studying Africa'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/assymmetric war."

Major Chris Buckham, Royal Canadian Air Force Journal

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Let me start by saying that I have read every book published 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 ridiculous to spend. So for me this book rates high just for this reason. As for content this book I will briefly hit some salient points; The contents; Foreword Prelude - 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.

Review: Selous Scouts: Rhodesian Counter-Insurgency Specialists Peter Baxter Selous 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 pseudo-guerrilla unit and an intelligence unit 1973 - 1980. 1980 was the end of white rule in Rhodesia. They would capture 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 *â œpseudo guerrillas.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.

As someone who has been privileged enough to own *Assignment Selous Scouts*, Pamwe Chete, *Bush War in Rhodesia*, *Three Sips of Gin*, et al. I think that this book fills a critical need to an objective, overarching look at the Scouts. The book begins with a brief overview of the war, which while succinct, definitely invites the reader to read a work like J.K. Cilliers' *Counterinsurgency in Rhodesia* if they are not already familiar with the conflict. From there it moves on to the formation, internal, external, reconnaissance, and intelligence operations of the unit during its short history. The book is written with talent and honesty. It provides an engaging and intriguing introduction into special operations forces at work in Rhodesia and does not overwhelm them with the intricacies and jargon of the conflict or the unit. In this sense the *Africa @ War* series meets and exceeds Osprey books both in pictures and information. This is particularly of note to those with an interest in African conflicts, which have been denied the slavish attention given to other conflicts. Furthermore, if you cannot pay the exorbitant amounts commanded for a copy of Pamwe Chete, you'll be happy to know that most (but not quite all) of the photos of that book have been reproduced here. My complaints are primarily for those who are like myself. This book draws heavily from information contained in *Assignment Selous Scouts* and Pamwe Chete and despite being new does not add much to their accounts. While both of the prior were more personalized accounts I was hoping for a little more information of the nitty-gritty of the unit and their operational practices.

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