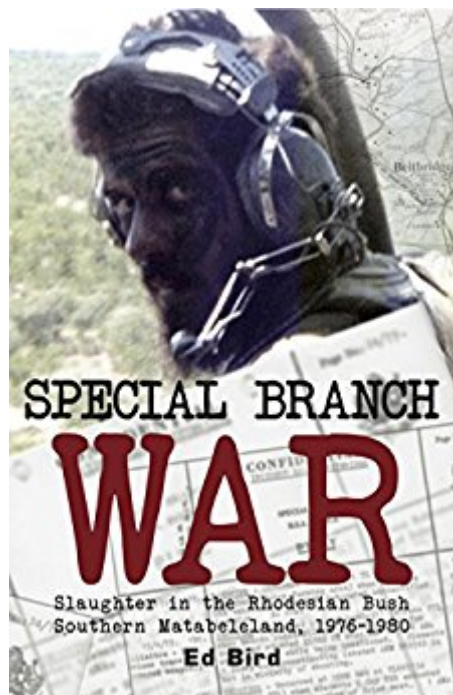




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Special Branch War: Slaughter In The Rhodesian Bush. Southern Matabeleland, 1976-1980



Synopsis

This searing account primarily covers Ed Bird's Special Branch (SB) service in the Beitbridge area of southern Matabeleland, 1976-1980, encompassing Operations Repulse and Tangent of the bitter Rhodesian 'bush war'. Joining the British South Africa Police (BSAP) in 1964, Bird cut his teeth on Selous Scouts 'pseudo' operations during Operation Hurricane in 1974-1976, so was well equipped to deal with the insidious escalation of the ZANLA and ZIPRA campaigns in the south of the country. A meticulous recorder, Bird implemented and maintained the Beitbridge SB incident log, and it is this diary of terror and death upon which Bird's account hangs, interspersed with detailed accounts of fire fights, ambushes, landmine blasts, ZANLA executions, traitors and assassinations, SB 'dirty tricks' and 'turning' terrorists. Although first and foremost an intelligence-gatherer, Bird thrived on combat and against all protocol inveigled his way onto Fire Force operations and as an air mobile MAG machine-gunner on converted Police Reserve Air Wing aircraft. Decorated for bravery but overlooked for promotion, Bird's BSAP career became victim to spurious political expedience.

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Customer Reviews

Unfortunately it was a dolled up regurgitation of log/journal entries, when the author took the time to expound upon some of the incidents to which he had personal knowledge he did a good job of telling the tale. It would have been more telling if he had been able to include more from his personal experiences. Over-all an interesting insight into the plight of the security forces that labored on in the face of great odds and outcast by the international community to stop the spread of communist influence in Africa.

Very precise and factually correct narrative by a very dedicated and brave man. I was part of this "war" on 4 "fronts" in 29 years and this is an excelant account.Regards

This book is an important historical account of a particular area of this war, being based on the original incident log recording the daily events that occurred and the writer's involvement in them. It is a gripping read for anyone who was involved in those times and that conflict. It also provides another facet to the multi-dimensional history of the country once know as Rhodesia and will appeal to anyone who has an interest in that history or those times.While it is important to preserve the incident log as a historical document, I found the ongoing log entries became rather repetitive after a while and a bit impersonal, especially considering that they document the death, destruction and upheaval of so many people and their livelihoods. It would have been good to get more of the author's reminiscences and his personal take on each event, although that would no doubt have made the book far too long. It would also have been good to get more detail of the author's own experiences after leaving the BSAP and his thoughts, feelings and circumstances on leaving Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. The ending, like that of Rhodesia itself, seems a bit too rushed. Perhaps a second edition may appear one day?Anyway, the book contains many interesting photos and documents which altogether makes for a fascinating read.

Definately gave me another view of the war

ok read was expecting a more action book.

Very good book about the Rhodesian war from a somewhat different perspective.

Having spent 2 years in Zimbabwe, I am very interested in Rhodesian history. I have read many books on the Rhodhesian War, and enjoyed just about all of them. This one I just stopped at 42%.

The problem is that instead of making it a good narrative, the author has filled half of the book with entries from his police journal of the type "On 25 April, a police mine-protected vehicle detonated a landmine in the Siyoka TTL. There were no injuries".

Just finished reading this book, very detailed, fascinating and interesting read. Writing about a country and it's war, over 35 years ago, is quite remarkable. Having lived there during this period, I am familiar with much of what is written, times and places and certain incidents, are fascinating to say the least. A lot of time and work went into this book and I highly recommend it to anyone doing a study, or interested in that period of Rhodesia's history. Ed Bird is a straight shooter and writes maybe too honestly!! Highly recommended!!!!

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