

Praise for *Delta scout*:

“This book has humour and honesty and works because of its diversity”

People

“It is a story richly interspersed with anecdotes. Trethowan’s passion for his job is infectious in this very touching biography. Of all the books that have appeared about the Rhodesian war in recent months, this has been the most enjoyable”

Andrew Beet, *Pretoria News*

“An eminently readable book ... a must-read for all interested in counter-insurgency warfare”

African Armed Forces Journal

“The author is a born raconteur and his account of his career in the police force in the first half of the book is both entertaining and sad. I recommend this book to all who want to know how it really was”

Jean Wyatt, *Saturday Dispatch*

“Told without bitterness in a straightforward, unadorned style ... an honest and at times moving account of what life was like for a young foot soldier caught up in a military maelstrom”

Anthony Stidolph, *Witness*

“An eminently readable book”

defenceWeb

“... I found it very difficult to put down this honest and enthralling book”

Heinz de Boer, *Daily News*

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Anthony Trethowan

DELTA SCOUT

Ground Coverage operator



This book is dedicated with love to my wife,

*Janine
and my daughters, Nicolle and Leanne*

Send no weapons, no more money Send no vengeance across the seas
Just the blessing of forgiveness for my new countryman and me Missing brothers,
martyred fellows, silent children in the ground Could we but hear them, could they
not tell us

“Time to lay God’s rifle down”

Who will say “This far no further, oh Lord, if I die today”

*James Taylor
Belfast to Boston (God’s Rifle)*

DELTA SCOUT LAUNCH – 2 October 2008

My Lords, Mr Trethowan, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very honoured to be asked to join you all tonight to say a few words as part of the book launch for *Delta Scout*. For unlike many of you, my credentials do not stretch to having served with the British South Africa Police or having participated in the events of the '70s in Southern Rhodesia—merely to having been born there to one of its regimental officers in earlier times.

It is the story of an ordinary policeman, a young man who signed up with the British South Africa Police at a very tender age as a very raw recruit and who, as a young patrol officer, was to experience rural life in remote stations in the bush where he dealt with a wide array of crimes and incidents—from murder, tribal suicide, sorcery, robbery and drunkenness to horrific vehicle accidents. Indeed, while reading Tony's book, I was struck during the early parts just how redolent of my father's service was Tony's. My father joined the BSAP from the UK in 1929, some 50 years earlier than Tony at the age of 20, and indeed my family returned to the UK in 1958 just as Tony's was going out there. Although Land Rovers and motorcycles had become the norm in the '70s, as opposed to the horse that was my father's routine transport, I could have substituted my father's name for Tony's. I suppose, at the end of the day, the policeman's lot is a pretty consistent one although I would venture a happier one than Gilbert and Sullivan claim.

But, of course, with onset of the war the similarities ceased and as the bush war intensified, Tony found himself more and more involved in paramilitary operations. Ground Coverage was the name given to the BSAP intelligence-gathering units—operating literally 'on the ground' in the rural areas. Known by his enemy, Nkomo's ZIPRA guerrillas, as Babaleka, or 'he who runs hither and thither' because of his propensity for rapidly covering vast areas, alone in his beaten-up police Land Rover, the second part of the book deals with his conversion from civilian policeman to full-blooded counter-insurgency operator in an African guerrilla war.

For campaigns in the modern era, there is much to consider here. For warriors with the courage and aggression to employ such confrontational tactics, this book illustrates clearly what fast-moving, small deployments can achieve. The Rhodesian government security forces believed passionately in what they were fighting for and their lethal aggression ensured their enemies did not survive to fight another day. The combat strain on those conducting the fight was almost unbelievable, for the Rhodesians, who were always desperately short of ground troops, were sometimes obliged to send the same men into action more than once a day.

There is a piece in his book which resonates with everyone who has been involved in fighting wars. Without being pious or sentimental I genuinely believe that values like duty, honour and respect underpin the actions of successful warriors. Often these values originate in the distinctive chemistry of the small group. Men wish to be valued and valuable; to gain the respect of others whose opinion they esteem; to be brave—or at least not to seem too frightened. Although, oddly enough, showing physical courage often turns out to be easier than men expect, especially if failure seems the worst enemy of all. Tony describes this well and he and his close buddies were bonded together by a unity of experience that had shaken off every kind of illusion and which was utterly unpretentious. These men were family and home to each other, closer than it is possible to say, closer than their friends were or ever would be. None would ever let the others down.

There are a number of books that chronicle and describe the Rhodesian bush war and one is able to get some sense of the intensity of the fighting, the extraordinary acts of bravery and the extent to which blood was spilt. At the time none of this received the sort of high-profile media coverage that we see in Iraq or Afghanistan. As far as I know Tony's is one of the few books that gives so personalized an account of one man's endeavours in pursuit of a cause, a cause that, with independence, and what we know now, was to lose its lustre.

Although for a short time after independence Robert Mugabe was hailed as a liberation hero admired around the world and who ushered in prosperity, healthcare and a literacy rate of 85 per cent—the highest in Africa—it was not to last. His politics have turned into thuggery and holding on to power has become his top priority.

During the last seven years, intimidation has become his chief weapon. His radical land redistribution plan set out to seize white-owned farms and turn them over to black farm workers. Instead the farms were given to members of his inner circle, who don't know how to run them. A once-thriving agricultural economy has been brought to its knees, and many of Zimbabwe's most productive farms now lie fallow.

Over the course of his rule, he has brought each one of the country's democratic institutions to heel; he has muzzled the media, he has politicized the police force and the military and he has rewritten the laws to maintain his power base. It all must have become an increasingly bitter pill for Tony and his contemporaries to swallow after the enormous sacrifices they all made. This makes it even more important that stories like *Delta Scout* are told and read.

I can only offer my warmest congratulations to Tony Trethowan on his remarkable book, commend it to all who have not read it and look forward to its widest possible success.

—General Michael John Dawson Walker, Baron Walker of Aldringham, GCB,
CMG, CBE, ADC, DL

Speech at the launch of
Delta Scout

London, 2 October 2008

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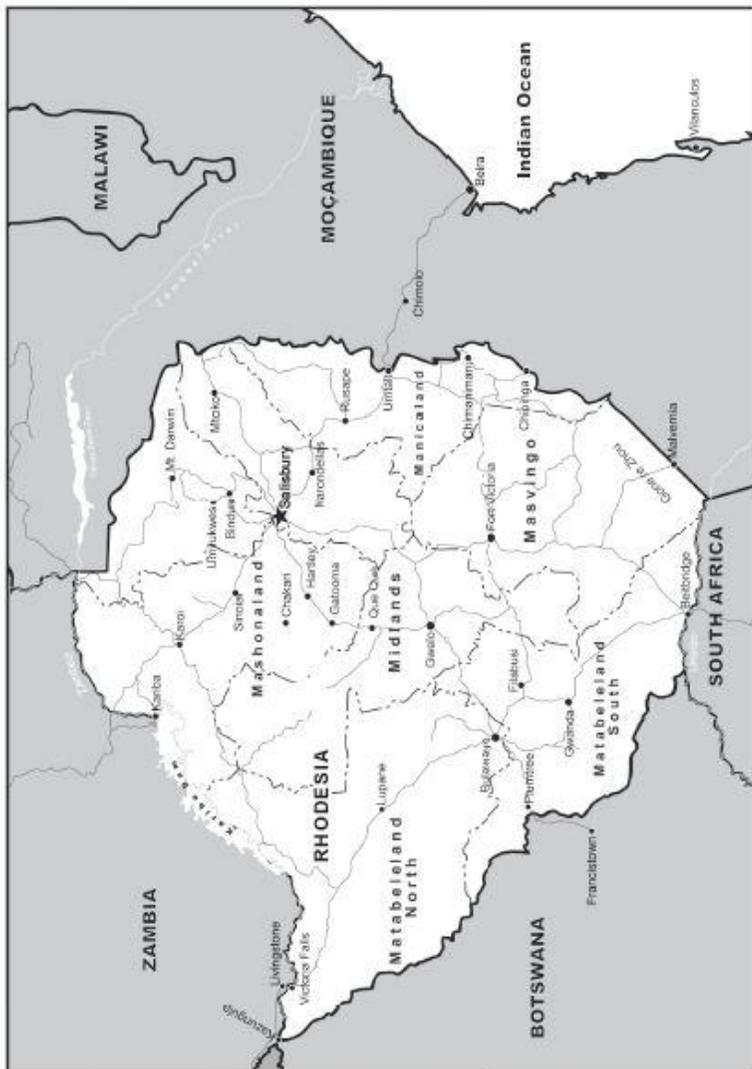
Special Branch—*Pamberinehondo!*

Chapter twenty-four

Imphi iphelile, Comrade Ukuthula

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Map of Rhodesia