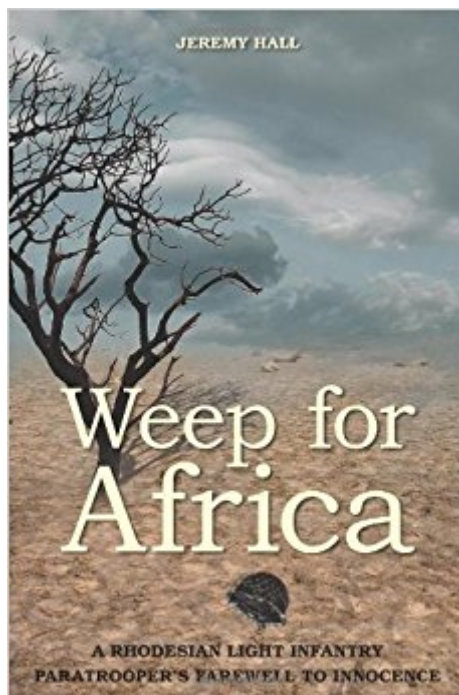




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Weep For Africa: A Rhodesian Light Infantry Paratrooper's Farewell To Innocence



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 "scabs". 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. REVIEWS "A loner by nature, his sensitive appreciation of his surroundings is evident in his writing, in spite of often hostile circumstances. From his Natal-based almost colonial lifestyle through his many life-changing experiences in Africa, he has been able to stand back, to remember, to consider and to set down in writing a host of these memories – and to set aside others. This is an extremely well written book that tells it like it is and as a result it is difficult to put down and impossible to forget." Shelagh Nation

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Helion and Company (March 19, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1909982334

ISBN-13: 978-1909982338

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (28 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,270,154 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #106 in Books > History > Africa > Zimbabwe #586 in Books > History > Africa > South Africa #721 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Africa

Customer Reviews

The author, leaving Africa finally and returning to his adoptive home in Canada, weeps angry tears for "what it had been, could have been, what it is now; its future so unknown, what it should be and is not." The tale of Jeremy Hall's early years in Africa is told harshly and with no holds barred, in a style so direct that he seems to be simply telling his story to a friend, probably over a beer. Hall was a privileged child of a well-to-do family dominated by a short-tempered father, given to political ranting, who showed little affection for his son, and was outspokenly contemptuous of the local Zulus and other blacks. Born in 1954, Hall spent most of his childhood in the farming Midlands of Natal, first near Mooi River and then in the sugarcane growing area of Eshowe, finally completing his schooling at Kearsney College in Durban. Of this establishment he writes "Despite the bullying, I have nothing but admiration for Kearsney College." And then, at eighteen, 'still skinny and beardless,' he faced compulsory conscription into the South African Military Service, to the Danie Theron Combat School. His description of the contempt for the 'Engelsmanne' by the Afrikaans speaking instructors and trainees at the School, of the foul language of the instructors, of their clear aim to break down the morale of the trainees, and of the minimal actual combat training provided, may raise some eyebrows; but as the mother of four sons who were conscripts in the mid-seventies, I can vouch for the absolute accuracy of his detailed description, almost word for word. He survived the course largely because of his determination to endure whatever came his way but also because of his fitness; he had since childhood run long distances every day.

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