**Animals, Prey, and Enemies:**

**Hunting and Killing in an African Counter-Insurgency[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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***Abstract:*** *Historians of African counter-insurgencies have claimed that the violence of colonial conquest, and the wholesale slaughter of fauna that often accompanied colonial conquest, was reproduced in the repression of anti-colonial and nationalist insurgencies. Using interviews, archives, and most of all the sizeable body of memoirs and novels by former Rhodesian soldier, this article argues that the hunting of African animals and the hunting of African insurgents were markedly different. First, the category of animals was deemed innocent and instinctive. As such it was expanded to include those Africans, most especially trackers in government employ, whose abilities were ‘natural.’ Second, the Africans who could be hunted however were not the enemy, but rather a category of allies and would-be allies who became prey. Thus the conduct of late twentieth century counter-insurgency was markedly different from that of nineteenth century hunting even as it reclassified prey and protected species as hunters did.*

***Keywords:*** *Rhodesia, war, soldiers, prey*

 Since 1945 scholars of war have been concerned with why men go to war and what they do when they fight. Do they go to war because in fact they want to kill, or do they dread firing their weapons on the battlefield? What soldiers do is in part determined by how they categorize the people they fight and the people they fight with and fight for -- there are friends and foes, civilians of indeterminate loyalties, non-combatants, and as enshrined in television series and movies, the men next to you.[[2]](#footnote-2) Scholars of hunting, aware that the motivations of hunters are probably more straightforward than those of soldiers, have been concerned with the categories of animals hunted – there are food animals, fur-bearing animals, domestic and semi-domestic beasts, the Big Five, and endangered species – as well as the categories of animals with which one hunts. Hunters’ relationship to their prey is one of many human-animal relationships at play in the hunt.[[3]](#footnote-3) In this essay, I want to begin to bring these two literatures together so that they shed light on each other, to show how the practices of hunting and warfare overlap and how they differ. I want to suggest that while hunters may have concrete categories for prey and their own animals, in warfare, especially insurgencies and counter-insurgencies, these categories become muddled in the extreme. [[4]](#footnote-4)

**Animals, prey, and war memoirs**

This article relies on my own field work, archives and most especially memoirs, the sheer density of which offers the kind of scope of personal experiences that historians often read as reliability. Starting with what became the canonical history of the war – Ron Reid-Daly’s 1982 *Selous Scouts Top Secret War*,[[5]](#footnote-5) a text that has been revised and subject to several lawsuits -- there has been a flood of published memoirs of or novels by white soldiers. Some of these were published in the 1990s, and many more have appeared in the early 21st century, more than twenty years after the end of the war. This is fairly typical of war memoirs and novels: both genres reflect on the experience of war, albeit after the events that created the experience in the first place. As such these accounts are not history, but texts that follow the shape of history.[[6]](#footnote-6) How then do historians use these materials to write history? Are they true or false? This may be an irrelevant question. War memoirs are useful because they are about a war, about ideas and sensibilities, not because they contain irrefutable facts. Tim O’Brien, perhaps the best known authority on collapsing the boundary between memoir and fiction, has written that true war stories are rambling and imprecise: in a true war story “nothing is ever absolutely true.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Leonard Smith, writing about French soldiers in World War I, has gone a step further and suggested that there is no real dilemma here. The line between fiction and non-fiction in French soldiers’ testimonies has “remained stubbornly unclear” but however difficult it has been for historians of that war to live with them, but “impossible” to live without them.[[8]](#footnote-8) But memoirs of World War I or Vietnam can all be read against operational histories of each war: no one reads Robert Graves or Rupert Owen, for example, to learn what happened at the Somme. In the case of the Rhodesia-to-Zimbabwe narrative, these memoirs substitute for an operational history of the war. *Selous Scouts* has served as what I can only call a universal source, cited as proof of the genius of Rhodesian counter-insurgency – evil or clever -- to both African and white nationalist authors. In recent years, and often beyond the gaze of nationalist writing, these memoirs have been sites of debate about wartime practices and operations. They are intertextual in the extreme, borrowing from earlier texts and frequently fleshing out a personal narrative or an evaluation of earlier texts with secondary literature.[[9]](#footnote-9) Some texts openly dispute the accounts of operations and operatives published in other memoirs.[[10]](#footnote-10) A text that accuses the Selous Scouts of smuggling ivory and leopard skins includes Reid-Daly’s comments on the draft manuscript.[[11]](#footnote-11) All this makes these memoirs exceptionally useful as historical texts – not because they are true or accurate but because they contain debates about wartime practices; taken together they create a space that allows me to see what other sources do not reveal.

 It is because of these sources that I am critical of the literature that argues that in settler societies there was virtually no difference between hunting animals and hunting natives, especially rebellious natives. This literature asserts that white security forces used the same techniques of tracking, hunting, killing, and trophy-taking on both animals and humans. If there was a fine line, for example, between hunting Tasmanian tigers and hunting Tasmanian aborigines it vanished in the forests of Malaya as British soldiers and settler regiments took the heads and hands of communist-led insurgents.[[12]](#footnote-12) In some incarnations of this literature, there is no significant difference between the wars of colonial conquest and the repression of anti-colonial revolts. The literature specific to Zimbabwe argues that Africans were hunted like vermin by a racist regime. Africans were no better than pests, nuisances to be exterminated by the poisons and sprays of twentieth century warfare.[[13]](#footnote-13) This particular argument ignores the ways in which the vocabularies of pests –like Tutsi exiled from Rwanda calling themselves “cockroaches” or Zimbabwean guerrillas like my friend whose chimurenga name was “Weeds” – refer to invincibility, describing people who will always find a way to come back. My argument here, based primarily on these memoirs, is that the techniques of hunting big game and insurgents were markedly different. Professional hunters were not only aware of this, but it was the cause of complaint. One recalled taking a two former officers from the US Marine Corps –one was the editor of *Soldier of Fortune* and a veteran of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba – out hunting. The hunter had to loan them guns because they had only brought assault weapons which were “unsuitable” for trophy hunting. Even the revolvers they carried were of large caliber.[[14]](#footnote-14) When the hunting of animals was invoked it was for the history of the country, not the conduct of the war. At the officers’ mess in Wankie, a national serviceman listened to an old, retired major talk of the 1920s and ‘30s. As a young man he had “helped shoot out most of the game in Mashonaland to get rid of tsetse flies so commercial farms could be opened up. So much for stealing land from black people; they didn’t live there in the first place because ‘sleeping sickness’ carried by the fly kept them at bay.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

I argue that in this particular war the vocabularies of hunting and prey and animalizing Africans were not just complicated, but layered. The categories of friend and foe were not equivalent to those of prey and domestic animal; indeed, wild animals and prey were not a single category, while tamed animals were considered as animals and often used as prey.[[16]](#footnote-16) The word tame and idioms of hunting appear frequently in Rhodesian war memoirs and novels. Turned guerrillas, many of whom became Selous Scouts. were central to Rhodesian wartime myth-making. In *Selous Scouts: Top Secret* War, Reid-Daly always refers to such men as “*tame* terrorists.” In his second, barely revised version of the book, called *Pamwe Chete,* they were called “tame insurgents,” without the italics, and demonstrating that ‘terrorist’ and not the word ‘tame’ was the problematic part of his terminology.[[17]](#footnote-17)

There is another point specific to Rhodesia, which is that the security forces were much better at hunting animals than they were at hunting insurgents: they lost the war. Yes, there was and is a post-war mantra that Rhodesians “won every battle but lost at the negotiating table,” but it was a guerrilla war: there were no battles against guerrillas who were skilled at retreating, and the security forces did not fare well in every contact. The conduct of the war was at best search-and-destroy missions, described by one national serviceman as “patrol, ambush, patrol. Annoy the locals, burn things down.”[[18]](#footnote-18) The enemy – in this case the two guerrilla armies, the Zimbabwe Peoples’ Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) – were seen as skilled and thoughtful soldiers, constructing their tracks so as to confound Rhodesia’s security forces. Security forces were often awed by the quality of guerrilla soldiering.[[19]](#footnote-19) They were worthy foes, all of them, but they were not likened to animals until they came on side.

**Trackers and animals at war**

 In the late 1960s, the repression of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle and the conduct of Rhodesia’s bush war was considered a police matter, questions to be answered and problems to be solved by investigation and intelligence. Much of the intelligence was gleaned from an involvement in rural areas. Policemen went to kraals to ask families to help them ascertain if a certain young man had been trained in Cuba, for example. Did they know when their son was out of the country, or did anyone recall receiving mail from Cuba?[[20]](#footnote-20) Guerrilla actions did not require military reactions. A 1969 novel by Daniel Carney, formerly of the British South African Police (BSAP, the name of the police of Cecil Rhodes British South Africa Company, that was in use until 1980) makes this clear. The wife of the policeman hero is killed by guerrillas led by an albino called Whispering Death, who leads his followers chanting “who do we hate? The Europeans.” Nevertheless, the hero’s commanding officer forbids him to hunt down Whispering Death and his guerrilla gang. That is what “they” want, he explains. Guerrillas want whites to lose control, to go into the reserves “blasting away at anything you see” and abandon the rule of law and lose African support. The hero disregards this order and sets off with his faithful constable, Katchemu, to track Whispering Death. Katchemu is old and infirm, but he is a great tracker. Watching flies swarm, he goes off the trail, and on his hands and knees scoops away the earth near an ant hill, uncovering blood-soaked bandages over a pile of dung. He examines the dried blood: “This one will die soon.” He then interrogates the dung: “He unlaced his boots and buried his toes in it, feelings its warmth. ‘Maybe two hours in front,’ he said. ‘That’s all.’”[[21]](#footnote-21)

 It is impossible to read this passage and not be struck by the animalizing of Katchemu: he may not sniff the excrement he uncovers but he is down on all on all fours: later in the novel he smells the dried blood that he separated from the dust as he squatted beside footprints.[[22]](#footnote-22) Even real-life trackers – or as real as someone depicted in a war memoir might be – were presented as innocent and instinctive, men who had no real need for speech. There was Maplanka, a “wizened old Bushman,” perhaps five feet tall, who tracked for a BSAP post in Matabeleland in the mid-1970s. He carried his few possessions with him at all times, following spoor intently. He never spoke to the two policemen who flanked him as bodyguards, and he would stop suddenly and point toward the bush and immediately “lie down on his stomach with his face buried in the sand” to hide from the firefight that would begin in a few seconds.[[23]](#footnote-23)

In contrast, African trackers not only believed that good tracking was an acquired skill, but that it was best done when a tracker was standing upright. Reading imprints in the ground was not a matter of touch and smell, but of using shadows to see foot and hoof and paw prints with great clarity. A tracker for the SADF recalled his childhood in a kraal, and learning to read hoof prints for their distinctive patterns and injuries so as know which cow belonged to which owner. He also learned how to read human footprints, and the differences the footprints of young men and old men, between men and women’s prints, and those of a small man and a large woman. These were not natural abilities. In fact he was able to study such things because “there was no television or any other Western distraction…...”[[24]](#footnote-24) When white men learned to track they did so by staying upright as well. Whatever Western distractions they had grown up with, they learned to read shadows, not smells or the feel of dung on one’s toes: shadows could best be seen by walking. There was CJ Skeepers (“I grew up on my father’s farm… The bush was my life”) one of the army’s finest trackers. He could tell how many men were in a group, how fast they were going and what they were carrying. CJ studied tracks by making using the shadow cast by the slanting angle of the sun. “Each footprint told a story” with which CJ could assess who made them and how far ahead they were.[[25]](#footnote-25) Tracking could even be learned by adults. Anthony Trethowan, BSAP, learned to track from another white policeman. The best time to track was when the sun was low on the horizon, “because of shadows that revealed every minute indentation.” He started off looking at his own spoor, to learn the characteristics of footprints, and later followed his constables as they studied tracks, learning how to see who was running and who was dragging his feet. It was African constables who taught him how to cast for spoor on rocky ground.[[26]](#footnote-26)

In Southern Rhodesia and Rhodesia tracking was an excellent option for young white men during the war, because they received draft deferments for their service. It was a a good career option for Africans, as well: the largest single employer of African trackers were professional hunters, and second the parks department, which in 1973 had fifty trackers on its payroll, two thirds of whom were Africans. Black and white trackers were routinely involved in protecting African and commercial farms from marauding hippos, elephants and buffalo; they hunted lion, leopard, and crocodile that attacked domestic livestock. Some were involved in the elephant and buffalo culls that took place in the larger parks in the early 1970s; those who were considered the experience invaluable. Park service trackers had a reputation for finding their prey. Rhodesian army trackers “could not find the guys park service trackers could find.” Many of white trackers left in 1980, often to become professional hunters, while African trackers stayed in the parks service for years. Older African trackers – men in their 60s and 70s -- were routinely called in to establish the pace for younger trackers, which meant slowing them down so they could track for days rather than hours.[[27]](#footnote-27)

**Hunting guerrillas, killing primates**

If trackers working for Rhodesians were likened to animals, what were guerrillas likened to? Throughout the war African guerrillas were in fact difficult to hunt with the same policies and practices used for culling zebra or elephant or for trophy hunting. For several years the Rhodesian army tried to set up a system of rewards for hunting guerrillas. Nothing worked very well, in large part because the army could never quite figure out how bounties should be managed. In 1974, a reward policy was introduced: Africans and whites were offered financial reward for turning in or giving information leading to the capture of a guerrilla. Posters, mainly in rural areas, offered R$1000 for items of war and “up to R$5000” per guerrilla. In three years R$275,000 had been paid out – between 50-70 guerrillas by my estimate – and Special Branch declared it a failure. Africans feared retribution from guerrillas and did not turn them in, and whites did not bother to do so -- most white civilians had no idea who was guerrilla or not -- and members of the security forces could not receive rewards for identifying guerrillas while on duty. By 1977, the army was desperate enough to entertain a proposal that the “number of people” who did not join the security forces because they would have to forego reward money could be issued with weapons and ammunition. The army rejected this but by 1979, when it was clear that guerrilla numbers were increasing and that security forces had little control over rural areas, the army provided guns and ammunition to bounty hunters, many of whom were former Selous Scouts or SAS. Bounty hunters – euphemistically called “irregulars” – could go into most operational areas and could be paid for dead guerrillas and, if their paperwork was in order, be receive compensation for death or injury. [[28]](#footnote-28)

The idea that white soldiers conflated the hunting of animals with the hunting of guerrillas is reversed in the memoirs I’ve read. Dennis Croukamp was an enlisted man who served in the all-white Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) and the Selous Scouts. In 1970, on patrol with Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique, he watched Portuguese troops remove ears from the FRELIMO they had shot. This was not so much a trophy as proof that they had killed an enemy. Croukamp “felt good” about this: “The Hollywood syndrome” of the young soldier horrified that he had taken a life “is a load of crap,” he wrote: “it feels good, really good.” He had been hunting animals with a rifle since he was a child, but now, “hunting humans changed my thoughts of shooting helpless wild animals. I never again shot another wild creature just for sport after my first terr kill.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Anthony Trethowan, BSAP, thought it was just more exciting to hunt humans: it was “a thrill” to track any living creature, but it was most thrilling to track humans. “When you know they are armed and very much the enemy then that thrill is heightened.”[[30]](#footnote-30) Rhodesian soldiers did kill animals, of course, for food and for defense, but they seemed to have shared Croukamp’s distaste at having to do so. When an RLI patrol took shelter for a night in an abandoned holiday camp in a game reserve, they were attacked by a troop of baboons. The baboons were no match for automatic weapons. The next morning, the author looks at their corpses and laments: these were “innocent primates” who were “instinctively protecting their territory.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

Knowing animals’ innocence and instincts was what gave white men mastery of the bush far more than reading footprints did. In a 1967 novel in which this scene is one of many tangents, a district commissioner takes a young white man out on a boat on the Zambezi. The young man is collecting snakes and finds a “beauty” swimming in the river. He jumps into the water, catches it, and brings it back onto the boat holding the black snake’s head between his thumb and forefinger. As he is putting the snake into a bag it manages to spiral up his arm, and sink its jaws into the man’s lower lip. The black snake clings to the young man’s mouth to the horror of everyone else on board but the young man calmly forces the snake’s jaws open and “thrust” it into the bag. “Snakebite serum!” the district commissioner shouts. “Forget it,” says the young man. “It’s the black-fanged variety and they don’t shoot their poison until they have a real good grip. He only just got me…. I hope I didn’t damage his jaws,” he mused: “He’s a beauty.”[[32]](#footnote-32) This may be the ultimate knowledge of animals and their ways: if a white man knows enough about the bush and its fauna, there is no need to fear a black snake in his mouth.

**Shooting prey**

Throughout the war, Africans who were loyal to Rhodesia were often treated as prey. By prey I do not mean that these Africans were killed by friendly fire – by the poor shooting of men on their side – or that they were killed as a way to resist combat. There is nothing military about these killings. By prey I mean that these men who had not joined guerrillas (in one case they had left guerrilla armies) were tracked, hunted and killed by soldiers of the Rhodesian army. Three examples should make my point.

 Where Africans were hunted as prey it was not on patrol unless it was their own patrol, but in places where they were being ‘protected’ from guerrilla violence and in the spaces where they were being remade into security force auxiliaries. Protected villages were created in fits and starts beginning in 1972. They followed the strategic hamlets initiated in Malaysia and South Vietnam in the 1950s. As they were promoted by US advisors, they were to counter the Maoist ideal that guerrilla armies survived in a sea of sympathetic peasants, who would feed and shelter them. Protected villages aimed to separate guerrillas from peasants by grouping them in fortified villages where they could be mobilized into anti-communist if not loyalists. In Rhodesia protected villages may have generated more social change than political conversion but they occupied an enormous place in national servicemen’s lore.[[33]](#footnote-33) In his first book – before he became the world-weary expert on things Zimbabwean – Peter Godwin recalled being told a story that many national servicemen said they heard their first day in depot. A senior police officer explained protected villages: they were to cut peasants off from guerrillas, because of “that Mao Tse-tung principle…the people are the water and the terrs are the fish or whatever.” There was a 6am to 6pm curfew: all villagers had to be in the PV by 6pm. Anyone not in the PV was considered a guerrilla and could be shot on sight. A Police Anti-Terrorist Unit stick was sitting by the side of the road when an elderly African cycled by. The sergeant looks at the old man, and asks the corporal how far the away the PV is. About five miles. The sergeant then takes his rifle, aims at the old man, and kills him. Why, everyone asks. “C’mon, he’d never had made it to be the PV by 6. He’s a curfew breaker.” The senior police officer did not report the incident. “What’s the point?” The sergeant would say he shot a curfew breaker and most of the stick would back him up.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The Rhodesian African Rifles were, like other African rifle companies of the early 20th century, an *askari* regiment, African troops and white officers. This prompted any number of jokes about white men with African privates but by 1974 the RAR was not only the most experienced infantry regiment in the country but they were the most effective in terms of numbers killed and losses incurred. In a 2000 novel, an RAR officer tries to disarm the white officer/protagonist who shot a civilian at the start of an interrogation. The protagonist shoots his commanding officer and when his men discover what he has done he – perhaps in a fog, perhaps not – calls in an airstrike on his patrol. He alone survives, and as intelligence officers struggle to make sense of what he has done they construct various scenarios that might explain the protagonist’s actions. Had the men turned, either gone over to the guerrillas or attacked their officers? This was rejected out of hand, as it implied that “every black soldier might turn at any time. How then to explain the weapons and the dogtags? Had the young man gone berserk and shot his commanding officer? Had the platoon been attacked by guerrillas who killed them, donned their uniforms, and held the protagonist at gun point, trying to initiate an ambush? This last story is chosen, the protagonist becomes the hero who called in an air-strike on himself and his men in a fiction in which the Rhodesian troops were killed by guerrillas.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Security force auxiliaries (SFAs) were essentially a fantasy army formed when Rhodesia became the ridiculous hybrid Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and when counter-insurgency operations intensified. The final stage of struggle for minority rule embraced something akin to one man, one vote elections that brought Bishop Abel Muzorewa to power. His party had some grass roots and slightly less struggle credentials as Muzorewa himself allowed himself to be stage managed by a wide range of forces. By 1978 he was funded by South Africa and beloved by the Rhodesian army. The army – and not Muzorewa – began a policy called “safe return:” any guerrilla who gave himself up to the new black-led government would be trained to fight for it and be given amnesty for any and all actions committed as a freedom fighter. The policy was a disaster. There are no reliable figures on how many guerrillas actually surrendered, but many of those who did were young men who were undisciplined enough to have been cut lose by ZANLA and ZIPRA. No one quite knew what to do with them. Stories circulated that some were send to Libya for training; others were trained by Special Branch, but many remained undisciplined and flamboyant. Rhodesian television audiences were horrified by interviews with SFAs with dreadlocks and bandoliers and Comrade Mick Jagger. A few camps mutinied. [[36]](#footnote-36) One camp of 200 former ZANLA had rioted and threatened to kill their white officers. In the negotiations with Special Branch officers the ZANLA were given “smart red baseball hats.” The next day Fireforce made an assault on the camp, Alouette K-cars hovering over the camp shooting at anyone wearing a red cap, killing 178.[[37]](#footnote-37) This was a canned hunt. Stuart Marks has called the quail hunted on preserves “semidomesticates.”[[38]](#footnote-38) The category applies here and perhaps to the private armies of Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole, a founder of ZANU but by the late 1970s grasping for a way back into national but not necessarily nationalist politics, Rhodesia’s Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) saw these private armies not as a problem but as a political counter to ZANLA an ZPRA. Sent into the countryside to promote the ceasefire before the one man, one vote election of 1980 many were attacked and killed. Hoping to strengthen their ranks the CIO sent for fifty of Sithole’s men who had been trained in Idi Amin’s Uganda, but “most of them proved to tough to handle and had to be eliminated by the Security Forces before they could do too much damage.” Although these killings were listed as ‘terrorists’ deaths they were in fact “prophylactic killings” intended to save the lives of “countless civilians.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

**Conclusion**

Is there a pattern in these examples from memoir, fiction, and a well-honed wartime urban legend? I argue that there is, that this material taken together opens a space in which relations between soldiers and soldiers and soldiers and non-combatants are shown to be burdened by distrust and subjected to redefinitions of who is who. What is redefined is not just who is enemy and who is ally, but who belongs to which category of being and how much protection or violence that category requires. In the sources I use, atypical as some might think them, the line between animals and humans is concrete but the idea of prey, a category that can be identified as such and killed by whatever means seem most effective, is applied to those Africans who on sides, and who by no means could be classified as enemies. Hunting humans required categorizing them not as animals but as prey. Animals were a special category at least in wartime, instinctively knowledgeable about the land and too innocent to be held fully responsible for their actions, whether they were the wizened old trackers of the BSAP or a troop of baboons. It was Africans fighting for Rhodesia –either RAR or SFA -- or elderly men returning to protected villages who could be marked as prey; The vulnerability of Africans who fought for or sided with the Rhodesian army is striking in these accounts, not only because it is unexpected but because it requires an explanation specific to the conduct of the war. Although it is possible to read in some of these incidents the practices of game rangers – killing marauding animals, culling – no soldier I have spoken to or read used these terms. Instead, the hunting of humans that took place in this counter-insurgency was acknowledged as just that, but not in a way that marks a straight line from the 1870s to the 1970s, nor anything so linear as to be the hunting of enemies or interlopers.

1. A longer and somewhat different version of this paper was given at a Workshop on Hunting in Contemporary Africa, at the University of Cologne in March, 2015. I am grateful to the organizers and the participants for their comments and suggestions and to Andre Goodrich for encouraging me to hone that paper into this one. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2000 [1947]; Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in 20th Century Warfare* (New York, Basic Books, 1999); see also the quote from the end of the film *Black Hawk Down* (2001)*:* “When I go home, people ask me, "Hey Hoot, why do you do it, man? Why? You some kind of war junkie?" I won't say a goddamn word. Why? They won't understand. They won't understand why we do it. They won't understand it's about the men next to you... and that's it. That's all it is.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stuart A. Marks, *Southern Hunting in Black and White: Nature, History and Ritual in a Carolina Community* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991); Jacob Tropp, “Dogs, Poison and the Meaning of Colonial Intervention in the Transkei, South Africa,” *J. African History* 43, 2 (2002), 451-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In keeping with quotations from movies, see *Breaker Morant* (1980): “It's a new kind of war, George. A new war for a new century. I suppose this is the first time the enemy hasn't been in uniform. They're farmers. They come from small villages, and they shoot at from behind walls and from farmhouses. Some of them are women, some of them are children, and some of them... are missionaries…” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Lt Col Ron Reid-Daly, as told to Peter Stiff, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, South Africa: Galago, 1982). The Scouts were named for Frederick Courtney Selous, the big game hunter who eagerly hunted people in the Shona-Ndebele uprising of 1897. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I take this point from Samuel Hynes, *A Soldiers’ Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (New York, Penguin, 1997), 125-26 and Leonard V. Smith, *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers’ Testimony of the Great War* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2007), 105.. In the case of Rhodesian war memoirs, the production of texts has depended on publishers. Until desktop publishing and kindle editions got off the ground, there were only a few publishers who produced these books, some of which did not survive the lawsuits over Selous Scouts’ memoirs. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Tim O’Brien, “How to Tell a True War Story,” *The Things They Carried* (New York, Broadway Books, 1990), 67-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Smith, *Embattled Self*, 198. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. One quotes me. See Jim Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts: Inside Story of a Rhodesian Special Branch Officer* (Alberton, Galago, 2006, 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ed Bird, *Special Branch War: Slaughter in the Rhodesian Bush Southern Matabeleland, 1976-1980* (Solihull, Helion, 2014), 54-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Dennis Croukamp, *Only My Friends Call Me ‘Crouks’: Rhodesian Reconnaissance Specialist* (Cape Town, Pseudo Publishing., 2006), 382-90. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Simon Harrison, *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War* (Oxford, Berghahn, 2012). 24, 156-60. I am grateful to Stuart Marks for this reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Clapperton Chakanesta Mavhunga, “Vermin Beings: On Pestiferous Animals and Human Game,” *Social Text* 29, 1 (2011), 151-76. See also Sven Lindqvist, *“Exterminate All the Brutes”: One Man’s Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide* (New York, New Press, 1996 [1992]). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Giorgio Grasselli, *African Sunsets: The Story of an Adventurous Life* (Johannesburg, Rowland Ward, 2007), 177-78. I am grateful to Louisa Lombard for this reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Tony Ballinger, *A Walk against the Stream: A Rhodesian National Service Officer’s Story of the Bush War* (Solihull, Helion & Co., 2015), 276. Ballinger has missed the point about tsetse flies and farming but that strengthens my point. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. I had written several drafts of this paper without articulating this, but thanks to Steve Davis for pointing this out. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Reid-Daly as told to Peter Stiff, *Selous Scouts;* Ron Reid-Daly, *Pamwe Chete: The Legend of the Selous Scouts* (Weltevreden Park, Covos-Day, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ballinger, *A Walk*, 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See Luise White, “’Heading for the Gun:’ Skills and Sophistication in an African Guerrilla War,” *Comp. Studies in Society and History* 51, 3 (2009), 148-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. M/C, Special Branch, Gewanda, to M/C, Special Branch, Beitbridge, 8 April 1971, Rhodesian Army Association Papers [hereafter RAA] 2001/086/049/175, formerly in the now defunct British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Bristol. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Daniel Carney, *The Whispering Death* (New York, Corgi Books, 1980 [1969]), 66, 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Carney, *Whispering Death*, 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Anthony Trethowan, *Delta Scout: Ground Coverage Operator* (Johannesburg,30 Degrees South, 2008), 159. In the world after Tim O’Brien, I don’t have a problem writing about fiction and non-fiction in the same frame. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Sisingi Kamongo with Leon Bezuidenhout, *Shadows in the Sand: A Koevet Tracker’s Story of an Insurgency War* (Johannesburg, 30 Degrees South, 2011), 37-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Timothy Bax, *Three Sips of Gin: Dominating the Battlespace with Rhodesia’s Elite Selous Scouts* (Solihull, Helion, 2013), 131, 135-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Trethowan, *Delta Scout*, 158-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Nick Tredger, *From Rhodesia to Mugabe’s Zimbabwe: Chronicles of a Game Ranger* (Alberton, Galago, 2009), 43-44; Kevin Thomas, *Shadows in An African Twilight: Game Ranger, Soldier, Hunter* (Cape Town, New Voices Publishing, 2008), Kindle edition: Introduction; Author’s field notes, Harare, 2 August 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Chief Executive Committee to the War Council, Assistance to Vigilante Forces, 20 December 1977, RAA/2001/086/1132; Combined Operations, directive 17/78, “Bounty Hunters,” 16 July 1979, RAA/2001/086/017/919. Between 1970 and 1980 the Rhodesian dollar had hovered around $1.50US. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Croukamp. *Only My Friends,* 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Anthony Trethowan, *Delta Scout: Ground Coverage Operator* (Johannesburg, 30 Degrees South, 2008), 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Jeremy Hall, *Weep for Africa. A Rhodesian Light Infantry Paratroopers’ Farewell to Innocence* (Solihull, Helion, 2014), 282-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. John Gordon Davis, *Hold My Hand I’m Dying* (London, Diamond Books, 1993 [1967]), 121-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Philip A. Catton, “Counter-insurgency and Nation Building: The Strategic Hamlet Programme in South Vietnam, 1961-63,” *International History Rev.*, 21, 4 (1999), 918-40; Mike Kesby, “Arena for Control, Terrains of Gender Contestation: Guerrilla Struggle and Counter-Insurgency Warfare in Zimbabwe, 1972-1980,” *J. Southern African Studies* 22, 4 (1996), 561-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Peter Godwin, *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (London, Macmillan, 1996), 300-301. Author’s field notes Durban, 1 August 2001; Pretoria 20 July 2004; Harare 4 August 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Graham Doke, *First Born* (Cape Town, Book, 2000), 95-104, 122-43. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Author’s field notes, Barton-on-Sea, Hants., 31 July 2003; Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts,*313-17, 319; Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia’s CIO Chief on Record* (Alberton, Galago, 1987), 203-4; David Caute, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1983), 269-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Peter McAleese, *No Mean Soldier: The Story of the Ultimate Professional Soldier in the SAS and Other Forces* (London, Cassell, 2000 [1993]), 162-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Marks, *Southern Hunting,* 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ken Flower, *Serving Secretly: Rhodesia’s CIO Chief on Record* (Alberton, Galago, 1987), 204. Idi Amin was not in control of Uganda for much of 1979, so who trained these men and under what systems of remuneration and patronage is not clear. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)