

A Walk Against The Stream: A Rhodesian National Service Officer's Story of the Bush War

By Tony Ballinger



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A Walk Against The Stream takes a look at the experiences of a young national service officer in the Rhodesian army. This is a true story, encompassing all eighteen months the author spent at Victoria Falls, Rhodesia, facing enemy territory just across the Zambezi river in Zambia.

Initially allocated to 4th platoon, 4 Independent company Rhodesia Regiment (RR) as a subaltern and later on as a 1st Lieutenant in support company 2RR, the story starts with the author's training and subsequent deployment to the operational area. The events that unfold contain interesting military encounters, with battles against the Zambian army and local terrorists clearly depicted. The style of writing flows easily and graphically, drawing the reader into a half forgotten world.

But there is also another aspect to the story: the human side of it. It is an examination of the author's love of a country falling apart and the relationship that he forms with a local woman in the village; their love, hope and dreams snatched away by unfolding events. This is a riveting personal tale, interspersed with interesting facts and dozens of photographs. All the names and places are real, including the battle scenes with ZIPRA and the Zambian army.



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Editorial Review

About the Author

Tony Ballinger, born 13 April 1955, was raised in a modest but happy home in Salisbury, Rhodesia. He attended Admiral Tait junior school followed by Churchill High school where he enjoyed athletics, rugby and swimming. Preferring travel to tertiary education, he set off on a three year working holiday around the world, undertaking varied roles such as a clerk, carpenter's assistant, lifeguard and assistant train driver, the latter being in Sydney, Australia. Within two weeks of returning to Rhodesia, the author received call-up papers to do his compulsory eighteen months national service. While at Llewellin barracks in Bulawayo, an offer was put out for any candidate with an 'O' level education and above, to apply for a trainee officer selection course, to be run at the School of Infantry in Gwelo. The author underwent a very stiff five day preselection course and out of three hundred eligible men, only thirteen were selected to go to the School of Infantry. One of the successful thirteen, he found awaiting him a very stiff and demanding course, at the end of which only three men were commissioned; the author being one of them. Initially transferred to command 4th Platoon 4 Independent Company RR, he went on to serve in 1 Independent Company RR, Support Company 2RR and then finally he became a weapons and tactics instructor in PATU, the police anti-terrorist unit based at Morris depot, Salisbury. Tony has an avid interest in studying current geopolitical events, linking them to prophecies in the Bible and is currently writing a book on the subject matter. He is married with two children and currently lives in Salisbury UK, something he finds ironic as he was born in Salisbury Rhodesia.

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