



# The Equus Men: Rhodesia's Mounted Infantry: The Grey's Scouts 1896-1980

By Alexandre Binda

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## The Equus Men: Rhodesia's Mounted Infantry: The Grey's Scouts 1896-1980 By Alexandre Binda

This all new work by accomplished military historian Alexandre Binda, former paymaster to the Grey's Scouts, tables the remarkable story of Rhodesia's mounted infantry, the Grey's Scouts. Working closely with the last commanding officer, squadron commanders and a whole host of regimental personalities, all of whom have given The Equus Men their unequivocal support Binda has enjoyed unparalleled access to thousands of pages of archival documents and many hundreds of previously unpublished photographs. Here, he has traced the Grey's from their early origins in the Matabele Rebellion of 1896, where an 'unassuming Englishman, the Honorable George Grey', found himself originating a body of horseman named the 'Bulawayo Field Force', through to the formation of the Animal Transport Unit (ATU) which went on to become the Mounted Infantry Unit (MIU).

With the skill of a practiced narrator, Binda takes the reader through these early days to the establishment of the Grey's Scouts in the Rhodesian Army order of battle in 1976. Deployed to great effect during the bitter Rhodesian Bush War of the late 1960s – 1970s, the mounted operations conducted by the Grey's are succinctly and clearly detailed. Some of the contacts related make for astonishing reads and with the lively, vibrant, text one can almost feel the steaming sweat of rider and mount; sense the pounding adrenaline; hear the thundering hooves as a fearful enemy is pursued to battle's inevitable conclusion.

Suffice to say, "The Equus Men" makes for an engaging read. Trained and utilized as mounted infantry as opposed to cavalry, the Grey's Scouts saw exceptional success in the field. Lightly equipped, they were able to cover great distances at speed, live off the veldt with minimal support and through 'shock action', quickly engage and destroy insurgent forces. Originally a regular formation, the Grey's Scouts were augmented by Territorial and National Service soldiers as the conflict progressed and by 1980, when hostilities ceased, the Regiment numbered some 600 soldiers, both men and women, black and white.

With its informative text and rich profusion of photographs, "The Equus Men" is a stunning tribute to the equestrian and fighting prowess of the Grey's Scouts. It

is a remarkable story and one that is ever more relevant, given recent mounted and pack horse operations conducted by British and US special forces in Afghanistan.

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#### Review

“ ... For those interested in the counterinsurgency in Rhodesia in the 1960s and 1970s, this book offers insight into an innovative response to cross-border terrorist incursions.” (*Marine Corps Gazette*)

“Containing significant detail on individual raids, equipment, logistics and intelligence it is a goldmine...excellent.” (*Miniature Wargames*)

#### About the Author

Alexandre Binda was born in Beira, Mozambique in 1945. He joined the Rhodesian Army in 1965. Although he had attested into the Pay Corps, he was to get more operational and combat experience than any of his colleagues. Between 1968 and 1972 he took part in a dozen or so deployments with RLI and SAS combat-tracker teams in support of the Portuguese Army in the Tete Province of Mozambique, countering Frelimo and ZANLA guerrilla incursions from the north. During his 15 years in the Rhodesian Army, he did a four-year tour of duty with the Selous Scouts and was paymaster for the Grey's Scouts and other units such as POU (Psychological Operations Unit). He was awarded a Military Forces Commendation and was commissioned in 1979. Alex is a keen student of African military history and has written several articles for "Lion & Tusk", the magazine of the Rhodesian Army Association. In addition, he has undertaken a number of significant military history projects including "Masodja - A History of the Rhodesian African Rifles", "The Saints - A History of the Rhodesian Light Infantry" and most recently, his acclaimed work "The Rhodesia Regiment - From Boer War to Bush War: 1899-1980." Married to Jane, Alex now resides in scenic Northumberland's Cheviot Hills near the Scottish border in the UK.

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