1 Introduction

The Loyalties of Colonial Soldiers

From 1964 through to the 1979 ceasefire, Zimbabwean nationalists fought a war of liberation against the white-minority Rhodesian government. It was, in the main, a counter-insurgency (COIN) war with few large battles. The Rhodesian Army was one of the most prominent actors throughout the war. Its regular forces were dominated by black soldiers, a fact that many have found paradoxical.

Zimbabwe's independence settlement left three undefeated armies in situ in 1980, two from the liberation forces – the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) – and their antagonist, the Rhodesian Army. Robert Mugabe's new government commenced a tense process of integrating these former antagonists into one Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA).

In November 1980, serious inter-factional fighting, including the use of heavy weapons, broke out between members of ZANLA and ZIPRA, who had been housed in nearby camps in the suburbs of Bulawayo pending integration. In February 1981, the fighting reignited in fiercer form, and was widely perceived at the time as posing the danger of civil war.[1] Although the death toll was suppressed by the government, it was widely claimed that hundreds were killed.[2]

During both incidents, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe ordered the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR), a colonial regiment in which all soldiers were black and almost all officers were white, to stop the fighting, suppress mutinous forces, and restore order. The RAR had spent the previous fifteen years fighting the liberation forces, during which time Mugabe's party had labelled them as sell-outs. Mugabe himself had repeatedly threatened them with post-war reprisals (see Figure 1.1).

To utilise the RAR was thus seemingly a strange choice for the new government, and a dramatic intervention. As one newspaper headline summed up the situation: 'Mugabe sets old enemy on rebels.'[3] It was

[1] See, for instance, Lelyveld, 'Zimbabwe Quells Mutiny', p. 3; Borrell, 'Civil War Averted', p. 6.
[2] White, 'Battle of Bulawayo'. [3] Borrell, 'Mugabe Sets Old Enemy on Rebels', p. 1.

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Figure 1.1 RAR troops post-Entumbane clearing captured weapons (Photograph courtesy of John Wynne Hopkins)

striking too that these ex-colonial soldiers agreed to fight for a government led by their wartime enemy. Luise White has argued that their intervention 'saved the new state'.[4]

Yet the 'old enemies' of the RAR did not perceive their loyalty to Mugabe's new government as strange. In explaining their actions to me, they held that they had long conceived of themselves as 'professional' soldiers. In their view, this conception of professionalism mandated that they act in an 'apolitical' manner, and so they were duty-bound to fight loyally for the 'government of the day'. Drawing upon oral history interviews with black Rhodesian veterans, I argue that these concepts are fundamental to understanding why these soldiers fought loyally for the Rhodesian Army during Zimbabwe's liberation war.

Book Outline

This book is a history of RAR veterans as well as black soldiers who served in other Rhodesian units. Although most of my interviewees were combat troops, I also interviewed veterans who had roles in the support services as

[4] White, 'Battle of Bulawayo', p. 631.

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clerks, drivers, teachers, and signallers. However, the RAR features prominently in this book as it was the regiment in which most black soldiers served and was one of the most important Rhodesian units of the war. Although the RAR is little known today, during the colonial era, it was a famous, prestigious infantry unit with an enviable reputation earned during service overseas in Burma during World War II and, later, the Malayan Emergency.

A detailed history of the RAR is provided in Chapter 2; however, a brief historical sketch is provided here for context. The RAR was raised in 1940 as an *askari* ('soldier' in Swahili) regiment (black soldiers commanded by white officers); such units had existed in colonial Africa from the late nineteenth century and were commonplace in British colonies. During World War II, colonial regiments in British Africa ballooned in size and played important roles, notably in the Burma campaign. After the war, these units, much reduced in size, provided internal security and external 'imperial policing'.

All other *askari* regiments – perhaps the most famous being the King's African Rifles (KAR) which raised battalions in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda – were disbanded, merged, or amalgamated into the national armies of newly independent African nations as decolonisation occurred in the early-to-mid 1960s. The RAR was exceptional in this regard, disbanding only in 1981. Its soldiers were the last *askaris*.

The RAR's longevity was on account of the war fought by the Rhodesian government against Zimbabwean nationalists. Unlike most other *askari* regiments, the RAR played a major role during a war of decolonisation.[5] The scope of this book spans the RAR's last imperial involvement, when it fought in the British COIN war in Malaya as part of the East Africa Command, returning in 1958, through to its role in post-independence Zimbabwe, culminating in its amalgamation into the new ZNA in late 1981. This focus allows an exploration of how the loyalties of black soldiers were honed during an era of decolonisation, alongside why these loyalties remained resilient, and were indeed strengthened, during the liberation war, in which they played a prominent role in fighting against their nationalist kin.

For these soldiers, 'professionalism' not only incorporated technical military proficiencies, but also emphasised loyalty to their comrades and unit. Instilled through elaborate processes of military socialisation and

[5] The obvious exception is Kenya's Mau Mau conflict, in which units of the KAR fought. Kenya was also a settler colony; that it and Rhodesia (the only British settler colonies in Africa) saw protracted and bloody wars of decolonisation was no coincidence, as discussed later in this chapter.

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rigorous training, 'professionalism' was an all-encompassing ethos to which they were strictly required to adhere.

'Professionalism' was undergirded by the 'regimental loyalties' of these soldiers, in which their allegiance was vested in their regiment and the army, rather than any political faction. Service in the RAR was frequently a family trade, with soldiers following in the footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers. Vivid institutional memory – reinforced through tradition and pageantry – and widespread intergenerational loyalty created a powerful regimental culture.

Inherent to these 'professional' ideals was a normative conception that soldiers were 'apolitical', which meant that their primary allegiance was to the army, irrespective of their personal political preferences. These bonds of loyalty remained strong throughout the war, despite placing these soldiers in direct opposition to the nationalist movements whose strongholds were the very same rural areas from which most black Rhodesian troops hailed.

The bedrock of 'professionalism' was most obviously wartime military efficacy and this formed an important component of these soldiers' loyalty. 'Professionalism' was honed during the long COIN war in Rhodesia, during which RAR troops were heavily involved in airborne and heliborne infantry operations.

Black Rhodesian troops, all of whom were volunteers, were of significant military importance. They came to dominate the regular Rhodesian Army, comprising 50 per cent of its strength by 1967, 65 per cent by 1976, and more than 80 per cent by 1979.[6] They were also highly skilled, well trained, and experienced, renowned as 'probably the best trained black troops in Africa'.[7] Rhodesian Army studies determined that the RAR was 'by every possible measure' its most effective unit in the field.[8] The RAR was not only the largest,[9] but also the 'longest-serving unit of the regular army',[10] making it the senior and most prestigious regiment in Rhodesia.[11]

While the fighting efficacy of black troops has been noted in accounts of the war, there is little research on how their loyalty actually manifested. In

[6] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 178; Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun*, p. 214; Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *Rhodesian War*, p. 51; Downie, *Frontline Rhodesia*; Preston, 'Stalemate', p. 75; Evans, *Fighting against Chimurenga*, p. 10; International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey*, pp. 26–39.
[7] Burns, 'Rhodesia Fearful'. [8] White, *Fighting and Writing*, p. 128.
[9] Rupiya, 'Demobilization and Integration'; Kriger, *Guerrilla Veterans*, pp. 41, 109; Anti-Apartheid Movement, *Fireforce Exposed*, p. 5. 1RAR alone comprised more than 1,200 troops, and 2RAR 1,000 (Wood, *War Diaries*, p. 344).
[10] McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders', p. 264.
[11] Roberts, 'Towards a History of Rhodesia's Armed Forces', pp. 103–10.

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1995, Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger noted that 'further historical work on the Rhodesian forces' was required, particularly on 'the Blacks who fought in the Rhodesian forces'.[12] This book builds upon the small literature on black Rhodesian soldiers, which has principally focused on why these troops were motived to enlist in the first instance.

The first account of the RAR appeared in 1970, but offered little insight into black soldiers' lives, for it was written in exile by Christopher Owen, a white ex-RAR officer who resigned in protest at the white settler government's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. Thereafter he wrote a short monograph chronicling the RAR's formation and World War II campaign in Burma, in which he commented that 'I had set myself a mammoth task. No history of the RAR had previously been published, and what information there was was both scanty and piecemeal.'[13] His book comprised just seventy-one pages.

Subsequently, two scholars have published work on black Rhodesian soldiers, with a focus on explaining 'the apparent paradox of the African volunteer serviceman' in Rhodesia.[14] In 1978, Peter McLaughlin, an academic at the University of Rhodesia (after 1980 the University of Zimbabwe), was the first scholar to devote serious attention to black Rhodesian soldiers as part of his wider work on the Rhodesian military.[15] Later, his 1991 journal article, 'Victims As Defenders: African Troops in the Rhodesian Defence System 1890–1980', was the first scholarly piece specifically devoted to black Rhodesian soldiers, and it utilised the official colonial archive.[16] It was, however, empirically thin when covering the post–World War II period, reflecting the great difficulty in researching this topic. The lack of sources that plagued Owen also troubled McLaughlin. A full 128 citations were used to write the history of African soldiers from 1890 through to the end of World War II, but the section covering the post–World War II period to 1980 cited not a single source.

A sea change occurred with two monographs published by Canadian historian Timothy Stapleton: *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (2006) and *African Police and Soldiers in Colonial Zimbabwe 1923–1980* (2011). The former reconstructs the regimental history of the Rhodesia Native Regiment (RNR), using accounts written by its white officers preserved in the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ). The latter is a sweeping account, drawing upon the NAZ and other official sources, local and foreign press reports, and oral history interviews with police and army veterans.

[12] Bhebe and Ranger, 'Introduction', p. 16. [13] Owen, *Rhodesian African Rifles*, p. 70.
[14] McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders', p. 243. [15] McLaughlin, 'Thin White Line'.
[16] McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders'.

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Stapleton analyses the lives of black police and soldiers throughout this period thematically, focusing on key aspects including day-to-day life in camp, policemen and soldiers' perspectives of their service, and opportunities for 'education and upward mobility'. Aside from Stapleton and McLaughlin, very little scholarship has been produced on black Rhodesian soldiers, in contrast to the wide-ranging literature on the wars of those who fought for ZANU and, to a lesser extent, ZAPU.[17]

I return to Stapleton's *African Police and Soldiers* momentarily to situate it as part of a wider literature on colonial troops in Africa. Firstly I discuss how many accounts of black Rhodesian soldiers have marginalised or obscured their role and the nature of their loyalties.

A History Misunderstood, Marginalised, and Distorted

Most narratives of black Rhodesian soldiers have obscured and misrepresented their loyalties and military function. This, in part, reflects the lack of a credible alternative. In contrast to other wars of decolonisation, an authoritative history of Zimbabwe's war remains to be written.[18] The systematic destruction or removal of official Rhodesian archives at the war's conclusion has posed significant challenges for scholars, as discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, systematic wartime Rhodesian censorship and propaganda impaired accurate contemporary reporting.[19] Journalists were heavily restricted, making it difficult to establish the credibility of information, and many accounts drew heavily upon the Rhodesian government's narrative for lack of alternative.[20]

[17] See, for example, Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse?*; Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War*; Bhebe and Ranger, *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War* and *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*; Sibanda, *Zimbabwe African People's Union*; Lan, *Guns and Rain*; Bhebe, *ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare*; Alexander and McGregor, 'War Stories'; Mhanda, *Dzino*; Martin and Johnson, *Struggle for Zimbabwe*; Frederikse, *None but Ourselves*; Mutambara, *The Rebel in Me*.

[18] Compare to the vast number of scholarly monographs on other Cold War–era conflicts: R. B. Smith's *An International History of the Vietnam War* extends to three volumes; J. A. Marcum's history of the Angolan Revolution comprises two volumes, *The Anatomy of an Explosion* and *Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare*. See also Horne, *Savage War of Peace*; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo*; Short, *Communist Insurrection in Malaya*; and Feifer, *Great Gamble*. The two histories of Zimbabwe's war generally cited remain Moorcroft and McLaughlin, *Rhodesian War*, written by two scholars who were Rhodesian reservist servicemen during the conflict and who draw much of their account from unpublished and un-cited Rhodesian sources, and Martin and Johnson, *Struggle for Zimbabwe*, which has been considered as partial towards ZANU's perspective (particularly at the expense of ZAPU), and features a foreword written by Robert Mugabe.

[19] Evans, 'Wretched of the Empire', pp. 180, 186–7; Godwin and Hancock, *'Rhodesians Never Die'*, pp. 311–12. See also pp. 39, 74–5, 115–16, 170, 182.

[20] Burns, 'In Rhodesia', p. 4.

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The small amount of scholarship published during or soon after the war was also largely characterised by poor accuracy for, as McLaughlin argued in 1978, 'researchers are reduced to relying largely on official communiques, hearsay and intelligent guesswork'.[21] For instance, Cynthia Enloe, a renowned scholar of military affairs, used black Rhodesian soldiers as a case study in her book *Ethnic Soldiers*, but makes several notable errors, asserting that 'in 1976 it was announced that … some blacks would be allowed to become non-commissioned officers [NCOs] in their own regiments', despite the fact that black soldiers had been NCOs since the formation of the RNR in 1916.[22] Likewise, she claimed that 'paratroopers, an elite unit in many militaries, likewise remain an all-white institution in Rhodesia',[23] which is incorrect given that the RAR provided half of the airborne Fireforce companies, discussed later, and that many African soldiers boasted more than forty combat parachute jumps, placing them firmly among the most experienced combat paratroopers in the history of warfare.[24]

During the war, journalists critical of the Rhodesian government tended also to make misleading assertions about black soldiers because they simply inverted the story told in Rhodesian propaganda. The academic and novelist David Caute – a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford – authored a widely cited account of the war, *Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia*, which falls into this trap. Caute trumpets his prolonged period of research in Rhodesia, but his discussion of black soldiers is error-strewn. For instance, he falsely claimed that 'the 3,000 black troops of the RAR were regarded essentially as support units' in an effort to counter Rhodesian claims that they signalled black support for the war against the liberation movements.[25] As was obvious to any casual observer of the war, the RAR were in fact front-line infantry troops.

Caute also claimed that the Selous Scouts was 'a unit just like any other', though, as discussed later, it was in fact a highly unusual unit, and gained much infamy for this reason.[26] Caute further diminishes the role of black troops by depicting RAR recruits as 'famished peasants, desperate refugees from the shanty-towns, and a few genuine uncle Toms [who] come in search of $(R)47 a month'.[27] As we shall see, none of these claims (including the rate of pay) are accurate, while the 'uncle Tom' jibe implies racial servility and moral failing.[28]

Under the Skin highlights how many powerful Rhodesian whites were racist and hypocritical and casually embraced extreme forms of violence

[21] McLaughlin, 'Thin White Line', p. 186. [22] Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*, p. 81.
[23] Ibid., p. 125.
[24] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 206; Downie, *Frontline Rhodesia*.
[25] Caute, *Under the Skin*, p. 187. [26] Ibid., p. 106. [27] Ibid., p. 190.
[28] See, for instance, Martin and Turner, 'Why African-Americans Loathe "Uncle Tom"'.

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to perpetuate a colonial lifestyle. But Caute's discussion of black soldiers resorts to a crude inversion of Rhodesian propaganda that lacks evidence and serves to denigrate their military effectiveness and to cast them as motived by desperation, greed, or a traitorous alliance with white settlers. Caute's book demonstrates that even accounts of the war researched at length failed to get to grips with the nature of black soldiers' military service and loyalties.

I have highlighted the errors in these texts by Enloe and Caute because they show how even noted scholars erred significantly in their depiction of black soldiers owing to the prevalence of Rhodesian narratives. They also indicate how some chroniclers of the war allowed their political beliefs to fundamentally inform their writing. Enloe and Caute's accounts – along with others with similar flaws – have subsequently been widely cited. This has led to an unwitting reproduction of images and narratives of black Rhodesian troops that are grossly distorted or are simply untrue.

Outside of the scholarly literature, the predominant narratives of the war have come to be bisected between two schools which I identify as 'Patriotic History' and 'neo-Rhodesian'. These renderings have long dominated the popular literature and public discourse of the war: Patriotic History for a ZANU(PF)-derived nationalist discourse, and neo-Rhodesian literature sympathetic to minority rule. These discursive polar opposites reflect the 'myths and simplistic narratives which have come to dominate "official" Zimbabwean histories of the war, in which "whites" are positioned against "blacks"'.[29] In this regard, they reflect writing on other wars of decolonisation, such as the 'Manichean perspective that has framed the great bulk of writing on the Algerian War and the French Army'.[30]

Before discussing neo-Rhodesian narratives, I turn to Patriotic History, which is a form of victor's history that has come to prominence in Zimbabwe since the post-1998 economic and political crisis. Inherent to this discourse is a political reimagining of wartime history that portrays it as won solely by ZANU(PF), reduces it to a simplistic binary racial narrative, and castigates all those associated with the colonial state as sell-outs.

Patriotic History primarily takes the form of media, performance, speeches, and memorial practices, in contrast to the largely textual narratives sympathetic to the Rhodesian perspective (discussed below). It silences and demonises black soldiers for the political purpose of legitimising continued ZANU(PF) rule. It deliberately simplifies or ignores the

[29] Dorman, *Understanding Zimbabwe*, p. 17.
[30] Alexander, Evans, and Keiger, 'The "War without a Name"', p. 2.

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nature of black Rhodesian troops' loyalties, for its reductionist spin on liberation war history cannot parse their nuanced form of allegiance.

Wartime history is frequently contentious. The military historian Samuel Hynes cautions us to be wary of how wars are mythologised in retrospect, condensed into a comprehensive, oversimplified, and biased narrative – one which often deems them a 'good war' or a 'bad war'.[31] Post-war myths can become intractable and are often tied up in the politics of the present. For instance, in 2002, Polish and Russian scholars created a working group to reassess twentieth-century Russo-Polish history, pockmarked by conflict, and even among these learned peers, 'the gap in perceptions was so wide that, when they published a book under the title *White Spots, Black Spots*, they decided to let a Polish and Russian historian give separate treatment to each delicate event'.[32] In Ireland, the salient political divide for almost all of the past 100 years was not that of left and right, but that between two parties representing factional allegiance during the country's post-independence civil war.[33] It is not uncommon for post-war regimes to craft distorted historical narratives for political advantage.

In much of southern Africa, independence was achieved only through prolonged liberation struggle, and the post-independence politics of these countries have been drawn along wartime lines. The post-independence version of history that has been framed and endorsed by ruling parties has often been no less partial than the colonial hagiography and settler myth it replaced.[34] For such states founded through victory in conflict, wartime myths provide ruling parties with a deep well of lore; a foundational, binding narrative of the nation. These retellings often extol military sacrifices and achievements. As the historian Ronald Krebs noted, 'it is no accident that the symbols and rituals surrounding festivals of national independence and unification have traditionally been interwoven with martial imagery'.[35] Such folklore advances a narrative of victors' virtue, the losers condemned to perpetual pillory, thus constituting an ongoing basis for claiming legitimacy.

Former liberation movements in southern Africa realised the value of controlling the historical narrative during their transition to power,[36] and many subsequently sought to 'instrumentalise and appropriate national history for their own means' as part of a strategy to legitimise increasingly autocratic rule and corruption, or to marginalise new political enemies.[37] Examples include what Metsola refers to as the 'liberationist dichotomy

[31] Hynes, *Soldiers' Tale*, p. xiii. [32] Barber, 'Russia Is Once Again Rewriting History'.
[33] See Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*.
[34] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Death of the Subject'. [35] Krebs, *Fighting for Rights*, p. 17.
[36] Werbner, *Memory and the Postcolony*, p. 2. [37] Schubert, '2002, Year Zero', p. 835.

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[as] the basis of SWAPO's legitimacy',[38] manifested in the militaristic and triumphalist memorialisation of Namibia's war of independence in Windhoek;[39] and the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola's (MPLA) propagation of a 'master narrative' wherein it portrays itself 'as the winner of the liberation struggle and the "natural representative" of the Angolan people as a whole' to the detriment of its political rivals.[40]

Zimbabwe's history has been instrumentalised in this fashion. After winning power in 1980, Mugabe's government became increasingly reliant upon a highly partial narrative in which its supposed military achievements underwrote its authority. As White argued, 'the political world of the 1970s' became 'the founding moment of the nation', with the ZANU(PF) government deriving its legitimacy from the war.[41] This tendency to rely on wartime narratives was greatly increased with the onset of Zimbabwe's economic crisis in the late 1990s.[42]

Precipitous economic decline and social unrest meant that Mugabe's capacity to appeal to the delivery of development as a basis for legitimacy became far more difficult, and ZANU(PF) faced a major new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), that was a serious rival for power.[43] This questioning of ZANU(PF)'s competence posed an existential threat to its dominance of post-independence politics.[44] Its response was to look inwards and to revert to and ratchet up rhetoric which 'emerged from the hegemonic and authoritarian circumstances of the nationalist liberation struggle'.[45]

Terence Ranger labelled this post-2000 narrative 'Patriotic History'.[46] Its loci are cultural nationalism and wartime patriotism, which provide a 'usable past' in service of a partisan ZANU(PF) agenda.[47] As Miles Tendi has argued, it rendered all Zimbabweans either 'patriots' or 'sell-outs', with the pejorative affixed to ZANU(PF)'s opponents, who were 'automatically typecast as "sell-outs", "puppets", "un-African" and "pro-colonial"'.[48]

[38] Metsola, 'The Struggle Continues?', p. 608.
[39] Kössler, 'Facing a Fragmented Past', pp. 369–72.
[40] Schubert, '2002, Year Zero'. Elsewhere see the Kenya African National Union's (KANU) instrumental usage of the 'ritual and spectacle of [Kenya's] anniversary celebrations to advertise and perpetuate their ideologies' through the 'inscription of monuments into Nairobi's landscape' – see Larsen, 'Notions of Nation', pp. 277–8.
[41] White, *Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, p. 94.
[42] See Raftopoulos, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, pp. 201–32, for a detailed summary.
[43] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'The Post-colonial State', pp. 104–7.
[44] Sachikonye, 'Whither Zimbabwe?'
[45] Scarnecchia, 'The "Fascist Cycle" in Zimbabwe', p. 222.
[46] Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography'.
[47] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Making Sense of Cultural Nationalism', p. 946. See also Scarnecchia, *Urban Roots of Democracy*; Kriger, 'Patriotic Memories'.
[48] Tendi, 'Patriotic History', p. 380.

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Counter-narratives were deemed illegitimate or disloyal, while the party's narratives of liberation, authority, and legitimacy were sacrosanct. Inherent to Patriotic History discourse is a manipulation and simplification of the country's history.[49] The liberation struggle is cast as a binary conflict between black and white. Those black soldiers who served in the Rhodesian Army were automatically deemed sell-outs or stooges deprived of agency.[50] As the historian Gerald Mazarire noted, many scholars writing today grew up 'in a context where the popular depiction of the war branded all African soldiers of the Rhodesian army as "sell outs" ... Some prejudices against the so-called "sell-outs" persist to this day'.[51]

In contrast to the members of the liberation armies, who have exercised important political influence under the banner of 'war veterans', those who served in the Rhodesian Army have been denied the status of 'veteran'.[52] One consequence of this 'memory politics' is that the histories of those who fought against the nationalist forces are rendered voiceless, even invisible. Not only does the mere existence of black troops who fought for the colonial power become heretical, but their history cannot be accommodated in the all-encompassing nationalist narratives.

In these circumstances, it is unsurprising that 'there is a general stigma attached to colonial military service', and that no books have been written by black Rhodesian veterans.[53] Some of my interviewees worried telling their stories might attract trouble from the authorities, both for them and for myself. Upon seeing my mobile phone, MSW told me that 'you must be very careful in Zimbabwe. They bug'. GMH told me 'even talking with you [now could be cause for being deemed a "sell-out"] ... There is no freedom of speech here in Zimbabwe'.[54]

Patriotic History thus has few uses for black soldiers of the Rhodesian Army. They are either absent or sell-outs. This depiction leaves no room for an exploration of the nature of their loyalties or indeed the military roles they played not only before but after independence.

The distortion of the role and loyalties of black Rhodesian soldiers was also a tactic used by the Rhodesian government, which had long sought to marginalise their contribution. Stapleton noted that Rhodesian government historians in the 1960s and 1970s, when compiling a history of the Rhodesian contribution to World War I, interviewed white veterans of the World War I-era RNR, but none of its black veterans.[55] This is

[49] Munochiveyi, 'We Do Not Want to Be Ruled by Foreigners', p. 69.
[50] ZANU(PF), 'Traitors Do Much Damage to National Goals'.
[51] Mazarire, 'Rescuing Zimbabwe's "Other" Liberation Archives', p. 95.
[52] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Death of the Subject', p. 10; Kriger, 'War Veterans' and 'Zimbabwe'.
[53] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 15. [54] Interviews with MSW and JMH.
[55] Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part*, p. 8.

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remarkable given that the vast majority of the *askari* regiment's personnel were black.

Texts about Zimbabwe's war published by ex-Rhodesian authors after 1980 largely continued this trend. As Zoe Flood argued:

> Despite the importance of black soldiers to the Rhodesian Army, acknowledged by both former white soldiers and the Rhodesian Government at the time, they are a largely neglected group . . . Whilst a range of literature by white writers, mostly memoirs or semi-official regimental histories largely published in South Africa, does focus on the Rhodesian experience of the war, black soldiers are generally marginalised.[56]

This literature has subsequently only grown in volume, with at least two dozen such monographs published.[57] Owing to the lack of available official records (discussed later) and a 'standard' account of the war, 'these memoirs substitute for an operational history'.[58] Their sheer volume has also in effect afforded them a de facto authority, as they are cheaply and readily accessible via online bookstores.[59]

These texts have sustained an influential set of views on the history of the Rhodesian Army which, a handful of exceptions aside, largely omit the contributions and histories of black troops. As Mazarire argued, the story of the Rhodesian Army has been 'biased towards white soldiers and white participants in the Rhodesian war' and reiterated their perspectives.[60]

The predominant narrative of these texts has been described as 'neo-Rhodesian' to describe how white ex-Rhodesians living abroad revisited and revised wartime discourse in order to criticise Mugabe's government, particularly following the onset of serious political, social, and economic crises in Zimbabwe after 1998.[61] Many of these neo-Rhodesian texts rehash wartime Rhodesian propaganda when discussing black soldiers. This messaging emphasised the high number of black personnel in the security forces and argued this was indicative of the support of the wider black population.[62] For instance, in 1977, the Rhodesian government

[56] Flood, *Brothers-in-Arms?*, pp. 3–4.

[57] Examples include, inter alia, Crouks, *The Bush War in Rhodesia*; Pringle, *Dingo Firestorm*; Parker, *Assignment Selous Scouts*; Wessels, *Handful of Hard Men*; Balaam, *Bush War Operator*; O'Brien, *Bandit Mentality*; Bax, *Three Sips of Gin*; Bird, *Special Branch War*; French, *Shadows of a Forgotten Past*; Ballinger, *Walk against the Stream*.

[58] White, 'Animals, Prey, and Enemies', p. 9.

[59] On this point see White, *Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, in particular chapters 4 and 5, which illustrate these white constructions of the Rhodesian nation.

[60] Mazarire, 'Rescuing Zimbabwe's "Other" Liberation Archives', p. 98.

[61] Primorac, 'Rhodesians Never Die?', p. 204. The discourse has clear antecedents too – see Chennells, 'Rhodesian Discourse'.

[62] See Maxey, *Fight for Zimbabwe*, pp. 33–4; Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 17; Whitaker, *The 'New Model' Armies of Africa?*, p. 193.

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supported the publication of a book entitled *Contact: A Tribute to Those Who Serve Rhodesia*. Its straightforward hagiography espoused this narrative, with the president of Rhodesia writing in its foreword that 'Africans and Europeans were "serving side by side against a common enemy"' in the form of 'communism' and that the Rhodesian Army was a non-racist institution.[63] Rhodesian narratives sought to portray the loyalty of black soldiers as supportive of the minority-rule regime, which, as we shall see, was manifestly not the case. This elision of black soldiers can also be seen as a perpetuation of the racist attitudes held by some white Rhodesian servicemen, who stereotyped black soldiers as incompetent.[64]

However, a few texts by white ex-Rhodesian veterans do not marginalise or ignore the contribution of black soldiers during the war. These have been authored by veterans of the RAR (or other units in which black and white troops served together). This is perhaps unsurprising, as the black veterans I interviewed emphasised that white RAR officers, and other white soldiers with whom they routinely served, did not speak or act in a racist manner – in contrast to white troops from other units, as discussed in Chapter 4. Yet these texts nonetheless distort black soldiers' loyalties by excluding their voices and by adhering to Rhodesian narratives when discussing their loyalties. Here I provide three examples.

In 2007, a history of the RAR, *Masodja: The History of the Rhodesian African Rifles and Its Forerunner the Rhodesia Native Regiment*,[65] was published by the Rhodesian Army Association, which Stapleton noted is an 'all-white veterans' organisation based outside Zimbabwe'.[66] One of a series of books on Rhodesian Army regiments written by Alexandre Binda and published by 30° South Publishers of Johannesburg, it comprises a series of detailed operational histories. In this respect it is a highly informative and very valuable text, as the author draws extensively from the closed-access Rhodesian Army Archive (RAA, discussed later) and other operational materials.

Although *Masodja* very briefly discusses how white officers witnessed no incidents of disloyalty from black soldiers during the war, it does not discuss their loyalties in any further detail.[67] The book cites RAA documents, secondary texts, and Rhodesian Army documents provided by white veterans; the only black voices cited are accounts reproduced verbatim from issues of *Nwoho*, and an account of Entumbane in the last chapter written by an anonymous black veteran in 1999.[68]

[63] Lowry, 'The Impact of Anti-communism', p. 187.
[64] White, 'Heading for the Gun', p. 237. A similar phenomenon of marginalising and damning has been observed by Andrew Wiest of Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers during the Vietnam War; see Wiest, *Vietnam's Forgotten Army*, p. 5.
[65] Binda, *Masodja*. [66] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 14. [67] Ibid., p. 12.
[68] See, for example, ibid., pp. 296–7.

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In 2015 and 2019, ex-RAR officers published a pair of books entitled *Chibaya Moyo: The Rhodesian African Rifles: An Anthology 1939–1980* and *Chibaya Moyo 2* ('Chibaya Moyo', the motto of B Company 2RAR during the war, means strike or stab to the heart).[69] Both state that they are not an attempt at a 'researched history', but rather are an 'anthology of anecdotes', almost all contributed by white veterans. As with many such semi-official texts, the contributors and readership alike largely comprise white Rhodesian veterans now living elsewhere in the Anglosphere.

In the first *Chibaya Moyo*, 178 of the 179 vignettes are from white authors (the only black voice is a *Nwoho* reprint). The 178 accounts include not only white ex-RAR officers, but also white soldiers from other units who were only briefly attached to the RAR, or who fleetingly encountered them on operations, or the wives or children of white ex-RAR officers. That the recollections of white persons who had a small impact upon the regiment are featured, whereas those of black soldiers are not, indicates both whose history is being recorded and the intended audience.

The second *Chibaya Moyo* volume contains contributions from two black veterans living in South Africa, Tinarwo Manema and Carl Chabata, whose contributions together account for three of the total 206 vignettes. They are, unfortunately, rather brief, at three paperback pages each. They comprise a statement of motivation for joining the RAR, short summaries of their wartime deployments, and some reminiscences of their comrades, with a further four pages from Chabata on his time in the Selous Scouts. There is no discussion of their loyalties.

Contributors to *Chibaya Moyo* express a great love and respect for the black soldiers with whom they served with. Two chapters of the first book are dedicated to lauding the courage, professionalism, and steadfastness of black soldiers.[70] It is clear that the authors and contributors to these texts hold black veterans in the highest esteem. This makes their almost total exclusion as contributors somewhat incongruous. While some contributors to these – and other – texts have proffered logistical issues or concerns for the security of black veterans in Zimbabwe as the reasons for their omission, these obstacles are by no means insurmountable.

The *Masodja* and *Chibaya Moyo* texts are not unique in this regard. In 1998, J. R. T. Wood published a detailed history of D Company, 1RAR's experience on an operation across the north-eastern border into Mozambique to attack a ZANLA camp in 1976. The article is an excellent operational account. However, its sole primary sources are the

[69] Telfer and Fulton, *Chibaya Moyo* and *Chibaya Moyo 2*.
[70] Telfer and Fulton, *Chibaya Moyo*, pp. 393–465.

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recollections and documents provided by a white ex-officer, David Padbury.[71] The detail is impressive, but the fact that a peer-reviewed piece on the combat experiences of the RAR neglects to hear from *any* black voices is striking, particularly given that many more black RAR veterans were alive in the late 1990s than are now, and that they were in fairly close proximity to the South Africa–based author, himself also a Rhodesian Army veteran. This is a fundamental weakness of the article, for beyond lauding black troops as 'tough African soldiers' and 'battle-hardened professionals' who fought bravely, displaying 'hardiness and effectiveness', Wood says little else of them. Although lauded, black soldiers' perspectives are not present.

Furthermore, all white officers are mentioned by their full name, and a small description is given of their role and sometimes their background, even if they were of tangential importance to the operation. Contrastingly, only one black soldier is referred to by his full name – John Selete, who was Padbury's batman (an officer's servant in the British tradition) – and two others referred to as 'Sergeant Saul' and 'PWO [Platoon Warrant Officer] Barnard', with all others referred to as 'an MAG gunner', 'a rifleman', or 'an RAR soldier'. It is striking that the author recalled the full names of the white officers but not even a single name of most of the black soldiers involved in the operation. This echoes what Michael West referred to as the 'depersonalization of the colonized', in which Rhodesian authorities sought to diminish the social status of blacks through the 'denial of individuality'.[72] It also reflects a lingering 'depersonalization' prevalent among some white Rhodesian veterans, for it was only in 1958 that 'African Westernised elites and security force personnel' in Rhodesia could officially 'have more than one name'.[73]

Why, then, have the voices of black veterans not been included in these accounts of the RAR? In part, the answer may be found in how they frequently portray black soldiers' loyalty to the Rhodesian Army solely as a product of the merits of Rhodesia; a predominant colonial-era narrative, as noted earlier in this chapter. This narrative has similarities with white farmers' portrayal of farm workers, which present life on the farms as an 'idealised view of race and labour relations' in which 'labourers had no problems, issues or worries and are presented as happy, industrious workers who were always content under their benevolent, white employer'.[74]

[71] Wood, 'Counter-punching on the Mudzi'.
[72] West, *Rise of an African Middle Class*, pp. 27–8.
[73] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 161.
[74] Pilossof, 'Unbearable Whiteness of Being', pp. 629–30.

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Such portrayals of entirely positive, hierarchical relations between white and black were a common trope in Rhodesian society (as they are in neo-Rhodesian literature) and were rarely disrupted by allowing unmediated black voices to appear. The *Masodja* and *Chibaya Moyo* texts, while acclaiming and honouring black Rhodesian troops, similarly marginalise the voices of black soldiers and account for their loyalties largely through reductive and idealised terms.

This point should not be taken to imply that relationships between black and white soldiers in the RAR and other comparable regiments were not strong – as this book will show, black veterans recall very strong bonds of loyalty and affection with their white comrades, and the enduring warmth of these relationships was readily apparent during research interviews. Instead, this point should be understood as highlighting how reasons posited retrospectively by some white veterans for the steadfast loyalties of black Rhodesian troops are overly simplistic, lack nuance, and – above all – largely reflect only white perspectives.

Criticism of the marginalisation of black Rhodesian soldiers in these texts should not, however, be understood to imply that the authors have overtly sought to disparage or disrespect black veterans. During the course of my research, I met with many white veterans who had served with black soldiers in the RAR and other units. These white veterans – some of whom were contributors to the aforementioned texts – uniformly evinced a sincere, deep admiration and respect for the black soldiers they served alongside. It was apparent during my fieldwork that the bonds between black and white veterans remained undimmed by the passage of nearly four decades since the war's conclusion.

It was also very clear that members of the RAR Association care very deeply for black veterans and have undertaken a considerable – and unheralded – amount of fundraising and voluntary work to provide welfare support for those in need. I have seen first-hand how vital and appreciated this assistance is among black veterans who otherwise subsist on meagre, devalued government pensions.

Furthermore, it should be noted that neo-Rhodesian views are far from uniformly held among white veterans. None of the white ex-RAR veterans I met in Zimbabwe espoused the neo-Rhodesian version of history. During my research in Zimbabwe, I was generously assisted in contacting several potential interviewees by a group of white ex-officers of the RAR Association. They were enthusiastic that the history of black soldiers should be recorded and recognised.

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The Motivations and Loyalties of Colonial Troops

Stapleton's *African Police and Soldiers* is part of a wider school of literature that has emerged during the past three decades. In general, little has been published on African colonial soldiers, despite the fact that more than 1 million served in the armies of the European powers during World War II alone,[75] and hundreds of thousands more thereafter in conflicts of decolonisation.

The historian Richard Reid argued that this neglect was a consequence of the 'decidedly Eurocentric' approach of many military historians.[76] It also stemmed from the tendency among authors interested in or sympathetic to nationalism during the era of decolonisation to view colonial 'collaborators' through a moral prism.[77]

As McLaughlin argued, 'historians of Africa have fallen into the same trap as Western Europeans who felt and feel compelled to explain their "Quislings" and "Collabos" as if they were a malignant disease or aberration rather than flesh-and-blood humans adjusting to changing political, social and economic conditions with limited foresight at their disposal'.[78] Michelle Moyd, writing on the *askaris* of the Schutztruppe (German colonial soldiers in east Africa), noted that:

> Nationalist historians prioritised research on East African resistance to colonial authority and virtually ignored the histories of African agents of colonialism like the askari, who were so obviously situated on the wrong side of history. While their emphasis on creating a usable past is certainly understandable, it has also meant that historians who came after them tended to view the German colonial period in East Africa through the prisms of African independence and the Cold War. Neither of these perspectives left much room for studying colonial agents like the askari beyond stereotypes.[79]

An emergent 'new school' – in which Moyd is eminent – has sought to move past these reductive framings.[80] According to Charles Thomas and Roy Doron, it has 'played a key role in revitalizing African military history' by placing increased emphasis upon the 'social histories of the colonial forces'.[81] Soldiers chronicled by this 'new school' include the Schutztruppe

[75] Killingray and Plaut, *Fighting for Britain*, p. 8. [76] Reid, *Warfare*, p. x.

[77] For a summary of such overtly nationalist literature on colonial soldiers in general, see Parsons, 'African Participation in the British Empire', pp. 258–60, and Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection'. For Tanzania, see Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*, pp. 9–10; for Kenya, see Anderson, 'Making the Loyalist Bargain', p. 70; for Zimbabwe, see Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, pp. 11–14; for Namibia, see Bolliger, 'Chiefs, Terror, and Propaganda', p. 126.

[78] McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders', pp. 241–3.

[79] Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*, p. 9. [80] Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, pp. 5–7.

[81] Thomas and Doron, 'Out of Africa', pp. 12–13. A contemporaneous emergent school is that of 'the rise of indigenous military history', which looks at the service of indigenous

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of German East Africa, the KAR, the Tirailleurs Sénégalais and other African soldiers in France's colonial army, Malawian soldiers in the KAR and other regiments, the *harkis* of French Algeria, the Katangese Gendarmes, and black soldiers in apartheid South Africa.[82]

This 'new school' has sought to explain the heterogeneous motivations of African colonial soldiers, such as Timothy Parsons, who argued that 'colonial military service must be examined in its social context . . . the willingness of Africans to serve in the colonial army was determined by a variety of social and economic factors that changed over time'.[83] Parsons showed that recruits were typically not those from the 'martial races' of colonial officers' imaginations, but rather those already integrated into the colonial labour network. This social and economic context was crucial: 'African societies were most "martial" when taxation and land shortages forced them to seek paid employment, and educational limitations and racial discrimination in hiring limited their options to unpaid wage labour.'[84] Contrary to earlier nationalist-inspired discourses that inferred immoral or treacherous motivations among these supposed 'collaborators' or 'mercenaries', African colonial soldiers' motivations differed little to other soldiers around the world throughout modern history.

Other scholars have also affirmed that soldiers' motivations varied widely and depended upon the historical context, such as in Kenya and Nigeria.[85] Moyd developed this point. 'African soldiers' loyalties had far more to do with their own understandings of social hierarchies and relationships of mutual obligation than with any abstract loyalties to European causes or governments.'[86]

A similar argument has been made of black soldiers in Rhodesia. McLaughlin argued of black Rhodesian troops that 'the military life appeals to many people, and Africans are surely no exception'.[87]

soldiers across 'the major Anglo-settler societies' (defined as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and South Africa), whose writers have emphasised 'the valiant efforts of Indigenous service personnel and their diverse motivations to serve, in conjunction with the often exploitative government approaches to Indigenous recruitment'. See Riseman, 'Rise of Indigenous Military History', p. 901.

[82] For example, see Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*. German East Africa comprised present-day Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi; Parsons, *African Rank-and-File*. The KAR were recruited from Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Somaliland; Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*; Woodfork, *Senegalese Soldiers*; Ginio, *The French Army and Its African Soldiers*; Lovering, *Authority and Identity*; Crapanzano, *Harkis*; Kennes and Larmer, *Katangese Gendarmes*; Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*.

[83] Parsons, *African Rank-and-File*, p. 1. [84] Ibid., p. 9.

[85] Anderson, 'Making the Loyalist Bargain', p. 51; Ukpabi, 'Changing Role of the Military in Nigeria', p. 63.

[86] Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*, pp. 12–13.

[87] McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders', p. 263.

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Stapleton contended that 'it is obvious from many personal accounts that material incentives were certainly important but hardly ever the only factor' and 'when looking at individual cases it is difficult to find any awestruck fools, greedy mercenaries, or clever manipulators of the colonial system'.[88] Motivations were 'heterogeneous' and multiple,[89] including, inter alia, the status of the uniform, adventure, the stability of a government job, opportunities for education, social mobility, provision for dependents, the availability of a pension, and sometimes patriotism.[90]

Stapleton's work has provided an understanding of the motivations to enlist among black soldiers in Rhodesia. But the act of enlistment was only part of the story, as he recognised:

> It is clear that the reasons why people initially volunteered were different than the reasons why they remained [in the RAR, with many joining] to gain stable employment and [who] then discovered other elements of the ... army experience, often less tangible ones like pride and discipline, which kept them in uniform.[91]

Given the his interest in both police and soldiers, and the sweeping temporal range of 1923 to 1980, Stapleton understandably devotes little attention in *African Police and Soldiers* to these 'less tangible' elements. In this book, I build upon Stapleton's formidable work and argue that these elements were highly important in explaining soldierly loyalty. They comprised two distinct factors.

Foremost was these soldiers' 'professionalism'. Inherent to this ethos was their soldierly prowess, honed through continuous training and operational experience, which was also co-constitutive of a deep, emotive sense of mutual obligation between fellow soldiers, as per the work of the military sociologist Anthony King, discussed later. Furthermore, these soldiers were socialised into a distinctive 'military culture', which created a powerful, emotive 'regimental loyalty' which incorporated 'traditions' to cultivate an accentuated sense of in-group belonging and homogeneity that bound them to their regiment, and thereafter the wider army. The 'professionalism' and 'regimental loyalties' of these troops ensured that they remained steadfast during combat and in the face of the surge in popularity of the nationalist challenge to white settler-colonial rule.

The aforementioned 'new school' has addressed the motivations of African soldiers to enlist. However, it has not devoted substantial

[88] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, pp. 29–33, 43.
[89] McLaughlin, 'Legacy of Conquest', p. 132, as cited in Stapleton, *No Insignificant Part*, p. 41.
[90] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, chapter 2, particularly pp. 43–4. [91] Ibid.

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attention to the actual production and nature of the loyalties of these troops. Aside from Stapleton, two scholars have recently published work that argues for the salience of the cleavage between soldiers' initial motivations for enlisting and their actual loyalties once in service. Lennart Bolliger, who interviewed black veterans of apartheid South Africa's external military units, noted that 'the reasons for joining [the] security forces were not always the same as the reasons for remaining in them'.[92]

Kaushik Roy, in his article on colonial soldiers in the Indian Army during World War II, also advanced a bifurcated understanding of soldierly loyalty, in which he divided 'the factors that influenced the soldiers' behaviour roughly into external and internal categories . . . while societal factors are important in shaping pre-combat motivation, the organisational apparatus of the army to a great extent shaped the in-combat motivation'.[93] These scholars both stress the importance of institutional 'military culture' in forging loyalties that sustain troops during war.

Stapleton, Bolliger, and Roy all highlight a crucial aspect of the soldiery loyalties of colonial troops: they were not only largely distinct from the initial motivation to enlist, but were also forged within the military milieu, within and by military institutions. It is no coincidence that these three scholars made use of the oral testimony of colonial veterans, for this cleavage is not readily apparent from documentary sources. Indeed it has evaded other authors of the 'new school', who have written about African colonial veterans who have long passed away. This book contributes to this body of work by using oral histories to show that black Rhodesian soldiers' loyalties were forged in the particular context of a small regular army which emphasised 'professionalism' and 'regimental loyalty'. These bonds, I argue, account for their distinctive and steadfast loyalties, and also explain why the Zimbabwean government retained these troops after independence.

I discuss the loyalties of soldiers drawn from marginalised communities in more depth shortly. I first advance a typology of soldierly loyalty based on a wider reading of military history.

Soldierly Loyalty and Professionalism

In the scholarly military literature, a long-standing argument stresses that armies demand total loyalty from their soldiers and require of them great acts of self-sacrifice, including willingly putting their lives at risk. The battlefield is often dangerous, and commonplace among soldiers are 'fear

[92] Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, pp. 104–9.
[93] Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', p. 500.

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of wounds, fear of death, fear of putting into danger the lives of those for whose well-being one is responsible'.[94] Soldiers must be relied upon to carry out their mission in spite of this. As King has pointed out, 'it is a striking and extraordinary fact that, despite the evident attractions of desertion, soldiers have often preferred to fight and die together'.[95]

In much of the analysis of this 'togetherness', the cheek-by-jowl existence of soldiers has frequently been depicted as akin to familial bonds. Such groups of soldiers are often referred to as the 'primary group'. As Hynes argued, wartime loyalties are pledged 'not to an army or a nation or a cause, but to a battalion, a company, a platoon. For a man adrift in alien space, his unit becomes the focus of his love and loyalty, like a family, and his feelings for it may be as strong, as complex, as family feelings are'.[96]

Soldiers have long enunciated such feelings in their correspondence. For instance, during World War I, in a letter to his subordinates, the commander of the US Army's 38th Infantry Battalion wrote, 'from the depths of a heart that knows soldierly affection, soldierly love, soldierly loyalty and soldierly devotion, I wish to commend you ... for your wonderful valor and amazing devotion to your Colonel'.[97] These affective loyalties have been seen as imperative to the ability of a unit to fight for a sustained period. Very much in this vein, in the aftermath of World War II, a scholarly literature on what motivated soldierly loyalty blossomed, foremost of which was Shils and Janowitz's seminal work which made the revolutionary argument that, contrary to prior understanding, the 'extraordinary tenacity' of German soldiers during World War II was not attributable to ideological motivation, but explained by the strength of 'primary groups' such as a soldier's fire team or platoon.[98]

A subsequent literature has foregrounded the link between the deep connections forged between troops at war and loyalty. As the sociologist of warfare and violence Siniša Malešević argued:

> [E]mpirical research on the performance of soldiers in combat has persuasively demonstrated that very few of them are motivated by their loyalty to their nation, state, ethnic group or to abstract ideological principles such as socialism, liberalism or religious commitment. Instead, the primary motive was a feeling of solidarity with other soldiers in their platoon.[99]

Malešević defines this solidarity within primary groups as occurring on a *micro level*, as distinct from the *macro-level* factors of patriotism, ideology, or creed. Micro-level bonds achieve their primacy during wartime.

[94] Keegan, *Face of Battle*, p. 18. [95] King, *Combat Soldier*, p. 13.
[96] Hynes, *Soldiers' Tale*, p. 10. [97] Harris, *Rock of the Marne*, p. 325.
[98] Shils and Janowitz, 'Cohesion and Disintegration'.
[99] Malešević, *Sociology of War and Violence*, p. 187.

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As Malešević argued, 'the battlefield context changes people's perceptions of social reality: a great majority of soldiers substitute macro-level ideological motivation for the micro-level solidarity of a small-group bond'.[100] Other scholars have referred to micro-level solidarities by different terms which nonetheless depict the same substantive meaning.[101]

In the aftermath of World War II, as militaries were reformed in various ways, these micro-level bonds became intertwined with an idea of 'professionalism'. The scholarly military literature historically tended to define military 'professionalism' as the technical-managerial capabilities of the officer corps.[102] For instance, Samuel Huntington famously delineated officers, who can be 'professionals', from soldiers, who cannot, arguing that the former engage in a 'higher calling', whereas the latter only enlisted for "monetary gain".[103] This approach was borne both of its time, when Western armies were still reliant on large numbers of conscripts instead of regulars (those for whom soldiering is their full-time occupation, and often a career, within a permanent force), and of a scholarly approach oriented around the civil-military relations of elites, which supposed that officers' 'professional' identities guaranteed their political impartiality and, furthermore, distinguished them from enlisted troops.

In contrast to Huntington, King has argued not only for the primacy of affective micro-level bonds, but for the importance of the specific form they take among regulars, as the 'cohesion typical of the mass citizen army has been superseded by a new kind of solidarity among the all-professional volunteer forces'.[104] King contends that the micro-level bonds present among regulars are qualitatively distinct to those of the mass-conscript or semi-professional armies that came before them. Professional soldiers, he claims, are not only the most militarily efficacious members of their armed forces, which may also include large part-time, reservist, or conscripted elements, but they possess particular micro-level solidarities that render them beholden to one another. This 'professional ethos' King defines in terms of a fastidious approach to military competencies, including skills such as marksmanship or battlefield

[100] Ibid., p. 223.
[101] See, for instance, Siebold, 'Essence of Military Group Cohesion', pp. 288–9. Guy Siebold criticised King's conception of soldierly cohesion and in turn was subject to a sharp rejoinder from King in an illuminating debate. See King, 'Existence of Group Cohesion in the Armed Forces'.
[102] See, for instance, Gates, '"New" Military Professionalism'.
[103] Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, p. 8. [104] King, *Combat Soldier*, p. 22.

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tactics. The importance of this ethos is not solely that it makes individual soldiers proficient fighters:

> Professionalism – substantially engendered through training – does not merely improve the practical performance of soldiers. It fundamentally alters the social relations between them; it transforms the nature of the associations between them. Professionalism generates a solidarity whose distinctiveness is often overlooked.[105]

I utilise this definition of 'professionalism' throughout this book to refer to soldiers' micro-level loyalties, for its tenets capture the nature of the solidarities between members of the RAR and, as I will show, my interviewees frequently referred to their 'professionalism'. This 'professional' ethos and its emphasis upon training were vitally important to the small regular component of the Rhodesian Army. This is unsurprising, for it was a facsimile of the British Army, which as King noted was itself 'one of the first western forces to professionalize and, indeed, it was the first all-volunteer military to be engaged in combat operations after the Second World War'.[106]

This is not to claim that the RAR was identical to a British regiment, or to any of King's other Western case studies, but instead to illustrate the pertinence of his 'professional' model in this context. Military proficiencies, such as marksmanship, tracking, and, later in the war, parachuting, were among the key 'professional' skills of RAR soldiers. Proficiency in these skills generated King's distinctive form of solidarity among black soldiers, in which they adhered to the goals of the 'primary group' not merely because of their high level of training in martial proficiencies, but also because this kinship was founded upon the reciprocal demand made of all RAR soldiers to strive for the highest standards of soldierly performance.

The ethos of 'professionalism' encompassed more than technical soldierly skills. Since the advent of all-volunteer regular armies, the professional soldier 'is almost by definition a social isolate, for his values and norms, his sense of commitment, his socialization and his self-realization seem to distinguish him from other members of society'.[107] Such forms of isolation, however, take historically specific forms that produce a particular normative conception of the role of the soldier. In the case of black Rhodesian soldiers, the narrative of 'professionalism' was used not simply to indicate their intergroup norms, skills, and training, but to negotiate the institutional racism inherent to the Rhodesian Army (as Chapter 4 discusses). In this manner, it was invoked by both black and white soldiers during their racial integration in the late 1970s, when the systematic racism of Rhodesia was trumped by 'professional' dynamics

[105] Ibid., p. 338. [106] Ibid., p. 346.
[107] Harries-Jenkins and Van Doorn, 'Armed Forces and the Social Order', p. 17.

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premised upon merit, such as gradations of rank. The RAR soldiers also used the 'professional' narrative to distance themselves from other factions of the security forces who were not 'professional', such as the Security Force Auxiliaries.

This concords with King's depiction of 'professionalism' as also functioning as a form of 'status honour' in which 'members of the group judge themselves and others and enforce appropriate conduct to each other'.[108] As I will argue, for black soldiers, this 'status honour' inherent to their 'professional' conduct legitimised their wartime role in a way not afforded to other combatants, such as guerrilla fighters, who they portrayed as preying on non-military targets, particularly civilians.

In tandem with the emphasis upon 'professionalism' as formulated in these contexts, new forms of what Malešević termed *macro-level* solidarities also became salient among black soldiers. These differed from the canonical scholarly military literature's understandings of macro-level solidarities, which implicitly incorporate a Western normative conception foregrounding patriotism, ideology, and sometimes religion. This extant literature's understandings of the loyalties of soldiers – from the World War II Soviet *krasnoarmiich* through to American troops at war post–9/11 – are almost wholly rooted in instances where soldiers have fought on behalf of their own country rather than for a settler or colonial power. A different approach is required in a colonial context. As Malešević argued:

> Rather than being a cause or a direct product of war, the ostensible macro-level solidarity and group homogeneity exhibited in times of violent conflicts originate outside of these conflicts. In other words, instead of being an automatic social response, homogenisation is a complex process that requires a great deal of long-term institutional work. In-group solidarity is not something that 'just happens' and naturally occurs in times of war.[109]

This argument is a critique of arguments that suppose war is itself constitutive of macro-level solidarities, but it also opens a pathway to a fascinating alternative perspective on the macro-level solidarities of black Rhodesian troops, one that doesn't presuppose a patriotic or political loyalty vested in the Rhodesian settler-colonial regime, but instead asks how macro-level loyalties were created within the unique environment of a black regular regiment that served in a minority-rule state.

Indeed, while patriotic or imperial-patriotic motivations did exist among some colonial soldiers, they were relatively rare.[110] In Roy's

[108] King, *Combat Soldier*, p. 363. [109] Malešević, *Sociology of War and Violence*, p. 179.
[110] See Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 57 for South Africa; McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders', p. 263; Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, pp. 26–9, for Rhodesia.

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work on Indian troops during World War II, he argued that 'patriotism was probably not an important factor', and instead 'the organisational apparatus of the army to a great extent shaped the in-combat motivation' of Indian colonial troops.[111] Likewise, Bolliger, who interviewed many black veterans of apartheid South Africa's external units, argued that these soldiers were not united 'by a supposed national identity', and instead idiosyncratic 'military cultures' played an important role in how soldiers of these units 'operated during the war'.[112]

Similarly, I argue that black Rhodesian soldiers derived their sense of what Malešević terms 'group homogeneity' and 'in-group solidarity' from the military culture of the Rhodesian Army, most importantly the RAR. As noted, the Rhodesian Army overtly mimicked the British system, and particularly the pageantry and symbolic power of the British regimental system, which had proven effective in garnering loyalty among troops across anglophone colonial Africa.[113] As I shall show, conspicuously 'invented traditions' were shaped to create a sense of collective identity and purpose. This 'in-group solidarity' was felt primarily towards the army, and only thereafter to the 'state'. Some of my interviewees rendered the state in the abstract as a 'willed-for' entity that mirrored the RAR in being meritocratic and competent, instead of the state as it existed – that is, captured by the RF.

The soldierly loyalties of black Rhodesian soldiers were quite different from those of black soldiers in apartheid's external units, as depicted in Bolliger's work. In one respect, this is somewhat surprising, as many South African personnel served on attachment to the Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) during the war for the express purpose of acquiring an understanding of COIN conflict in order to improve South Africa's own capabilities,[114] and South Africa made a concerted effort to recruit former Rhodesian officers into its army after 1980 in order to administer its own COIN units.[115] Indeed, Kevin O'Brien has argued that 'the centrality of the Rhodesian example' was 'reflected in the South African forces by the mid-1980s', and in particular 'the RAR would reflect on 32 Battalion and its counter-guerrilla operations in Angola'.[116] Yet the production and nature of their loyalties differed radically.

The key reason for this difference was that, as Bolliger argued, the 'military cultures' of apartheid South Africa's external units were 'highly

[111] Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', pp. 499–500.
[112] Bolliger, *Apartheid's Black Soldiers*, pp. 6, 120.
[113] Killingray and Plaut, *Fighting for Britain*, p. 136.
[114] Ellert, *Rhodesian Front War*, p. 93; Bolliger, 'Apartheid's Transnational Soldiers'.
[115] O'Brien, 'Special Forces for Counter Revolutionary Warfare', pp. 84–92.
[116] O'Brien, *South African Intelligence Services*, p. 58.

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heterogeneous and divided . . . often characterised by extreme brutality and violence, of which [black soldiers were] both targets and perpetrators'.[117] For instance, although many of these troops may have nominally been 'volunteers', their enlistment was often a desperate last resort. The Angolan soldiers of 32 Battalion, many of whom were ex–National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) troops already buffeted by the winds of the shifting transnational dynamics of a regional conflict nexus, faced a Hobson's choice: soldier or starve.[118] As I will show in Chapter 2, black soldiers in the Rhodesian Army were not only all volunteers, but were recruited in a fundamentally different manner; my interviewees often emphasised 'traditions' of familial and regional service, the social mobility offered by enlistment, or the opportunity for adventure.

In addition, the loyalties of 32 Battalion soldiers were not created through lengthy processes of military socialisation, nor through an institutional effort to create 'in-group homogeneity', as was the case with the RAR. Instead, they were enforced by 'the violent enforcement of discipline among black troops',[119] which often took shocking and extreme forms, including regular and widespread use of the '*sjambok* (a heavy leather whip)'.[120] As I will argue, this violence was inimical to the 'professional' ethos of the Rhodesian Army, which emphasised a juridical form of military discipline in the British mould that black RAR soldiers understood as 'fair'. In contrast, 32 Battalion's white officers possessed practically untrammelled authority. In this truly extreme military culture, deserters were simply executed and there was little accountability for officers, with one veteran describing soldiering in 32 Battalion as 'a life in slavery and bondage'.[121] The relationships between white officers and black soldiers in the RAR, while still characterised by racism, were nonetheless premised upon a perception by black soldiers of a shared notion of 'professionalism' that emphasised respect and reciprocal obligation.

These differences can also be seen among those who served in the South African paramilitary unit Koevoet. They experienced a hyperviolent, ill-disciplined culture that ritualised brutality both internally, for the purposes of discipline akin to 32 Battalion, and externally, through the widespread use of bounties for 'confirmed kills' and wanton violence levied against civilians.[122] Black soldiers of the Rhodesian Army

[117] Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, p. 329.
[118] Ibid., pp. 112, 135–7. Other 32 Battalion recruits had not been members of the FNLA, but had volunteered to join as their circumstances as refugees, migrant labourers, or ex-guerrillas made soldiering a relatively attractive proposition (ibid., pp. 141–7).
[119] Bolliger, *Apartheid's Black Soldiers*, p. 92. [120] Ibid., pp. 92, 101.
[121] Ibid., pp. 106–8.
[122] Ibid., p. 104; Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, pp. 168–9, 173.

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emphasised their 'professional' norms and held that these precluded the mistreatment of civilians. Indeed, they frequently invoked their 'professional' status as encompassing the protection of civilians. In this sense, they were similar to soldiers of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) – an army that recruited Namibian soldiers but was funded and officered by the apartheid regime and that resembled more closely a well-trained conventional army. Unlike veterans of 32 Battalion or Koevoet, its veterans did not emphasise the prevalence of 'physical punishment' but rather 'spoke of the importance and the professionalism of their military training', and emphasised that 'that the soldiers of SWATF "were not trained to kill innocent people [but] to take care of and to protect people"'.[123] A comparison to Bolliger's work illustrates that, while the armies of the settler-colonial powers shared commonalities, there were manifest differences in the ways the loyalties of black soldiers were produced and the form they took.

In sum, this section has argued for the importance of reinterpreting the loyalties of black Rhodesian soldiers as distinct from their initial motivations for enlisting. 'Professional' micro-level solidarities served to create not only proficient troops, but troops possessed of a distinctive bond of mutual obligation to one another which stressed a high level of performance. These bonds were reinforced by powerful solidarities in the form of the RAR's 'military culture' that served to create 'in-group homogenisation' among black soldiers. As we have seen, the differences among black soldiers' understandings of loyalty in southern Africa's settler-colonial armies were large. The differences were even greater between soldiers and other forms of paramilitary combatants who fought on the side of (settler-)colonial powers during wars of decolonisation.

Soldiers As Distinct from Other Colonial-Allied Combatants

The loyalties particular to regular soldiers distinguished them from other types of combatants allied to settler or colonial regimes that often played a significant coercive role during wars of decolonisation. It is important to understand this distinction, for it not only clarifies not the distinctive military role of soldiers, but also illustrates how their loyalties were fundamentally different to those of other types of colonial combatants, which had important implications at the moment of independence.

The high-water mark of colonial soldiering was World War II. More than 1 million African troops enlisted in the hitherto small armies of the colonial powers. That widespread inequity, and the increased

[123] Ibid., pp. 168–9, 175, 177, 180.

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dependence of European empires upon African servicemen during World War II, would likely change the status quo in the aftermath of the war was widely observed. Orwell's 1939 observations of the Tirailleurs Sénégalais are revealing in this respect:

> But there is one thought which every white man . . . thinks when he sees a black army marching past. 'How much longer can we go on kidding these people? How long before they turn their guns in the other direction?'[124]

As nationalist movements across Africa gained mass support and challenged imperial rule, they were heavily suppressed by colonial authorities. This was most pronounced in Africa's settler colonies. Every white settler regime resorted to violence to preserve itself, and nationalist movements took up arms in response. As Reid argued, the 'presence of sizeable and politically powerful European settler communities' complicated processes of decolonisation. In Algeria, in Kenya, and in southern Africa settler regimes introduced 'new grievances and patterns of conflict . . . as did especially obstinate metropolitan regimes, as in the case of the Portuguese colonies'.[125] To fight nationalist forces, settler-colonial regimes recruited thousands of paramilitary combatants, rather than greatly expanding the number of regular soldiers who were expensive to train and sustain.

This phenomenon has recently been the subject of a groundbreaking historical enquiry. Those who 'were willing to remain loyal to the colonial regime in the face of the nationalist challenge' during the 'wars of liberation and decolonization fought in Africa and Asia' after 1945 have been termed 'loyalists' by the historians Anderson and Branch.[126] During these wars of decolonisation:

> European colonial powers held the dominant position in these asymmetric wars, and they often used local auxiliaries to turn insurgency into civil war – immensely destructive for all the indigenous forces draw in on both sides, but effectively limiting the level of military commitment required from the metropole.[127]

Anderson and Branch's invocation of the term 'loyalist' is explicitly intended as a neutral way to reference combatants who fought for the colonial powers, shorn of the pejorative connotations of terminology such as 'collaborator'. Their 'loyalist' framework is broad by design, incorporating auxiliaries, paramilitaries, policemen, and militia, as well as soldiers. During wars of decolonisation, David M. Anderson and Daniel Branch argue, membership in any of these forces 'became politically toxic.

[124] Orwell, 'Marrakech', as quoted in Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 45.
[125] Reid, *Warfare*, p. 159. [126] Anderson and Branch, 'Allies at the End of Empire', p. 2.
[127] Ibid., p. 3.

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Loyalty to empire was now denigrated as betrayal, its adherents castigated as "self-seeking scoundrels" and the "running dogs of imperialism"'.[128] While all those in the employ of the state became prime targets for guerrilla violence in insurgencies, members of the security forces were especially so, for military reasons, but also for reasons of political symbolism, indicative of how quickly the concept of loyalty to the colonial state had become taboo.

The first widespread use of the term 'loyalist' in this context was its application to and embrace by Kenyan opponents of Mau Mau during the 1950s.[129] Rendering colonial security force members as 'loyalists' should not be taken to imply that they subscribed to the political ideologies of the colonists, nor that they wished to perpetuate imperial or settler-colonial rule. For instance, in 1971:

> Bethwell Alan Ogot was the first of Kenya's historians to probe the question of what defined loyalism in these difficult years of insurrection. Ogot identified several types of loyalist, each with differing motivation, but he did not think that any of them were genuine supporters of British colonialism.[130]

Branch developed this argument, arguing that 'loyalism' was a phenomenon that cut across class lines, inspired by heterogeneous motivations ranging from economic opportunism through to an imperial patriotism personified by the Crown, and 'was not solely imposed by colonial masters, but also an intellectual position embedded in local culture and social relations'.[131]

These forms of loyalty were very different from the solidarities of soldiers outlined in the previous section, particularly as regards the ideas of 'professionalism' that animated micro-level solidarities within regular armies. A marked distinction existed within colonial security forces between regular soldiers and 'auxiliaries'. They fought in the same wars, but their roles and, I argue, their loyalties, were quite different.

As Anderson and Branch noted, auxiliaries were *irregular* forces employed on a wide scale by the 'declining imperial powers [who] were either unable or unwilling to commit sizeable numbers of regular troops'.[132] Sybille Scheipers described auxiliaries as 'military forces that support the military efforts of regular armed forces of a state. They are hence distinct from regular armies'. Scheipers also noted that 'they did not undergo a process of regularisation' in contradistinction to regular colonial forces 'such as the tirailleurs, Gurkhas, KAR, and Malay

[128] Ibid., p. 7. [129] Branch, 'The Enemy Within'.
[130] Anderson, 'Making the Loyalist Bargain', p. 51.
[131] Branch, 'The Enemy Within', p. 293.
[132] Anderson and Branch, 'Allies at the End of Empire', p. 4.

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Regiment',[133] a list to which the RAR can be appended. That auxiliaries 'did not undergo a process of regularisation' had significant implications for the nature of their loyalties.

Regular colonial units required considerable investment in both time and resources: for instance, RAR soldiers received six months of basic training, yet were deemed by their commanders to require a 'further two years under good NCOs and officers' before they were considered fully trained.[134] In RAR soldiers' accounts, this produced fundamentally different loyalties to auxiliaries. Soldiering was their métier, not merely a job but a way of life. As argued earlier, their micro-level loyalties were premised upon a 'professional' ethos and were rooted in the 'military culture' of the army as an institution, rather than in 'local culture' or social or political divisions. In other words, soldiers' macro-level solidarities were vested in their regiment and the army while, in contrast, locally recruited and deployed auxiliary forces often abused their power to pursue personal gain or settle pre-war scores, or to advance the interests of a particular political or ethnic faction. Regular soldiers claimed legitimacy – and were at times afforded it even by their adversaries – because the targets of their violence were military in nature.

Auxiliaries played a fundamentally different role to that of professional soldiers. Cynthia Enloe argued that they were 'inherently less "professional"' than regular soldiers.[135] Scheipers, drawing upon case studies of auxiliaries from Vietnam, Malaya, Algeria, and Oman, argued that auxiliaries were generally poorly trained, inadequately equipped, ill trusted by their command hierarchies, and militarily ineffective. Auxiliaries were 'a departure from the earlier trend towards the increasing regularisation of colonial troops. They were deliberately set apart from regular armed forces and often stayed outside of the regular military command structures'.[136] Their primary value to the imperial power was political,[137] as their familiarity with local language, culture, and terrain provided useful information to regular forces, and their massed presence offered a propaganda boost in rural areas.

Their utility in combat against a military opponent was minimal: auxiliaries were largely used to deny insurgents access to the civilian population, as their continuous static presence deterred insurgent infiltration of rural settlements. This meant that their violence was mostly directed at civilians. Their ubiquity and presence as the public face of the imperial forces often made them loathed and rendered them prime targets: many

[133] Scheipers, 'Irregular Auxiliaries', pp. 15, 25.
[134] Downie, *Frontline Rhodesia*, 5m:00s–5m:30s.
[135] Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*, p. 222.
[136] Scheipers, 'Irregular Auxiliaries', p. 15.
[137] See also Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, p. 107.

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auxiliary units suffered horrific casualties. In Angola, the Portuguese raised local militias 30,000 strong by 1974. They were poorly equipped, with 'only a small percentage [having] access to proper firearms', and 'were considered "expendable", frequently being deployed for the interception and pursuit of enemy groups, coups de main, and other "risky" missions'.[138] In Rhodesia, the use of auxiliaries came relatively late in the war, was militarily disastrous, and cost civilians dearly, as we shall see.

The case studies within Anderson and Branch's edited edition on 'loyalists' foreground auxiliary forces rather than soldiers,[139] an apposite approach given the important – and somewhat novel – role of auxiliaries in these wars. This emphasis builds upon the approach of earlier scholars, such as Karl Hack, who argued that the effectiveness of the British COIN effort in Malaya was reliant upon 'deployment of Home Guard or local militias on a massive scale'.[140]

The spotlighting of auxiliaries is also present in the literature on civil wars, of which the seminal text, Stathis Kalyvas' *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, questions 'individual motivations for joining progovernment militias', noting that they were complex, heterogeneous, and changeable over time.[141] Despite the monograph's broad sweep, Kalyvas does not query the loyalties of regular military forces. Given that regular soldiers played a significant military role in many of the case studies Kalyvas draws from, this is a puzzling and significant omission.[142]

Although there were some commonalities between soldiers and 'auxiliaries', given the large differences between them as I have outlined, I do not use the term 'loyalist' to refer to black Rhodesian soldiers, so as to

[138] Oliveira, 'Saved by the Civil War', pp. 130–1.
[139] With the notable exception of Pedro Oliveira's article on African soldiers in Angola, discussed in detail later.
[140] Hack, 'Everyone Lived in Fear', p. 691. See also Ucko, 'Malayan Emergency', pp. 19, 22, 34.
[141] Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, pp. 97–100, 107–9.
[142] Ibid. Kalyvas provides a definition of militias that highlights their political rather than military nature, and utilises historical comparisons to outline their characteristics and usage across several regions and time periods. Yet he also includes the example of 'Algerian men who joined the French *Army*' in the midst of his many examples of loyalists joining *militia* (both emphases mine) and gives no explanation or context as to the reason for lumping auxiliaries and regular soldiers together. This may be a result of the frequent misuse of the term *harki*, which has rendered it slightly ambiguous. While the harkis were auxiliaries (*supplétifs*) that augmented regular forces, the delineation between auxiliaries, regular soldiers, and others (such as civil servants) allied to the French has lapsed with time (Crapanzano, *Harkis*, pp. 29, 70). In the decades following the war, *harki* 'became the blanket term for all pro-French Algerians'; this ambiguity can cloud understanding, given that in 1962, the number of harki auxiliaries was 58,000, yet there were also 20,000 Algerians serving as regulars in the French Army, alongside 40,000 conscripts and 15,000 police (Evans, 'Reprisal Violence', p. 92).

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avoid confusion with auxiliaries, and the general association of the term 'loyalist' with the Mau Mau conflict in Kenya. I do, however, build upon aspects of the colonial 'loyalist' approach for, as Anderson and Branch noted, their case studies have 'a resonance that carries forward into other examples of exit from less conventional imperialist settings in the Cold War era', for which they cite apartheid South Africa's units of externally recruited African soldiers as an example.[143] Likewise, black soldiers in the Portuguese Armed Forces and the Rhodesian Army are also examples of 'less conventional' settings.

These three instances were highly interconnected. The 'White Redoubt' powers of apartheid South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Portuguese government all perceived the wave of African decolonisation in the early 1960s as posing an existential threat to their settler populations.[144] In response, the 'White Redoubt' often coordinated their COIN efforts and provided mutual support in an attempt to preserve minority rule across southern Africa.[145]

As Crawford Young argued, 'a striking paradox of the terminal colonial state is that, in the large majority of countries where decolonization was managed by negotiation, internal security was maintained with strikingly small military forces', but the opposite was the case in settler-colonies, where liberation movements had to fight for their independence.[146] Not only did the white settler states arm themselves to the teeth, but they were willing to use this force liberally. As the political scientist Kenneth Grundy asserted, 'constraints that inhibit a more powerful metropolitan power's employment of force are virtually absent in the case of a settler regime. For settlers, the issue is not whether to fight opponents but how'.[147]

The 'how' involved large-scale and complex COIN operations, which necessitated not only auxiliaries or militia, but also increasing numbers of well-trained regular soldiers. The perpetual shortage of white recruits was an enduring strategic issue in Rhodesia, colonial Angola and Mozambique,

[143] Anderson and Branch, 'Allies at the End of Empire', p. 8.
[144] Portugal, 'both the weakest and the most obdurate of the European imperial powers', oversaw a large African empire which it deemed provinces of a singular 'pluricontinental' state. While Portuguese resistance to decolonisation was driven primarily by metropolitan politics, there were also large communities of influential settlers in both Angola (more than 300,000 in 1974) and Mozambique (more than 180,000). See MacQueen, 'Portugal', pp. 163–70.
[145] See several recent works by Filipe de Meneses and Robert McNamara: 'Last Throw of the Dice', 'Origins of Exercise ALCORA', and *White Redoubt*.
[146] Young, 'End of the Post-colonial State in Africa?', pp. 28–9.
[147] Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 273.

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and South Africa,[148] and was exacerbated as these conflicts intensified and the military demand for soldiers increased.[149]

Consequently, settler authorities abandoned their historic reluctance – premised upon fears of disloyalty – to arm black troops and rapidly increased their number. The Portuguese Army expanded the number of African troops from 9,000 (18 per cent of the total) to 61,800 (41 per cent) between 1961 and 1974.[150] Likewise, in Rhodesia, where the settler government had long insisted on maintaining a one-to-one ratio of black and white regular soldiers as we shall see, the recruitment of black soldiers rapidly increased in tandem with the intensification of the war, and by 1979, black troops outnumbered whites in the regular army by more than four to one.

These colonial soldiers became the vanguard of the settler forces during the latter stages of these wars.[151] Their loyalties functioned in particular ways and were distinct to those of auxiliaries. Colonial soldiers were often involved in protracted and dangerous combat, which placed particular demands upon their loyalties and, in some historical instances, caused them to break. Historically, colonial armies have attempted to forestall this by maintaining a 'social contract' with their soldiers, which I now turn to, alongside a wider literature that addresses loyalties in other regular armies comprised of soldiers drawn from marginalised groups.

The Loyalties of Colonial or Marginalised Soldiers As a Social Contract

The soldierly loyalties of African colonial troops were not usually premised upon the abstract political ideas or patriotism that has been observed as comprising macro-level solidarities in other armies, and were vested in the army itself rather than the state. This made them contingent upon a continually negotiated 'social contract' with the army. The loyalties of soldiers could only be created and perpetuated when their basic needs were met, for loyalty alone could not sustain troops through difficult

[148] South Africa's use of black soldiers differed from Portugal's and Rhodesia's as it had a much larger and longer-established white population, which provided the bulk of its military forces in line with the Boer commando tradition – as late as 1977, regular troops constituted only 7 per cent of the South African military, with reservists and part-timers making up the rest (Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 102). Black soldiers were admitted to the Permanent Force only after 1975 and by January 1980, there were only 490 black soldiers – 2 per cent of total troop numbers (ibid., pp. 199–200, 210).

[149] For Portugal, see Wheeler, 'African Elements in Portugal's Armies', pp. 239–40; Coelho, 'African Troops in the Portuguese Colonial Army', pp. 135–7. For South Africa, see Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, p. 55.

[150] Coelho, 'African Troops in the Portuguese Colonial Army', p. 136.

[151] Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 280.

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periods of fighting if they had nothing to eat, were not paid, or were abused by their officers. Likewise, soldiers had to have faith that their commanders would look out for their interests and protect them from needless danger, and that the sacrifices of their service would result in fairer treatment by the authorities. Colonial troops had long framed their soldiering in such a manner. For instance, the regimental song of the Natal Native Horse, raised in 1906, concluded:

> Oh what more can be done
> To earn the recognition of our King
> Than to give our life for King and country;
> Oh may we receive loyalty's fair reward –
> The faith and confidence of our rulers.[152]

As will be shown later, RAR soldiers also deemed that their service would result in more equitable treatment from the army.

In this manner, soldierly loyalties were not merely bonds of obedience, but were a form of mutual obligation between the troops and the army they served, and if one party ceased to meet these obligations, it would lapse. Soldiers expected the army to meet the promises made to them upon enlistment and during service. Breaking the expected conditions of service voided this 'social contract' and meant that soldiers would not re-enlist, and it sometimes resulted in disobedience and mutiny. For instance, to return to Roy, Indian Army troops remained remarkably loyal during World War II, despite many inimical factors. However, their loyalties faltered in peacetime when the drawdown of the colonial army jeopardised their future.[153]

Timothy Lovering writes of similar concerns among colonial Malawian soldiers, for whom dissent 'was most often a reflection of a belief that a "contract" between the Government and the soldier had not been fulfilled, or a reflection of a desire for fuller inclusion in the military system, rather than a rejection of the military authorities'.[154] As argued later, black Rhodesian soldiers expectations of this 'contract' being met were of key concern to Rhodesian authorities, who instituted a series of reforms during the war in areas such as pay, so as to ensure that black troops' loyalties were not corroded.

This 'social contract' was continually negotiated. As colonial soldiers' loyalties were vested, at the macro level, in the army rather than the state, the army's treatment of them was fundamentally important. During the wars of decolonisation in southern Africa, soldiers in the Portuguese colonial army

[152] Thompson, 'Loyalty's Fair Reward', p. 656.
[153] Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', p. 527.
[154] Lovering, *Authority and Identity*, p. 301.

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and apartheid South Africa's external units secured markedly improved status, pay, and conditions of service as settler-colonial authorities became more reliant upon them.[155] The importance of this 'social contract' has also been demonstrated in other contexts where marginalised soldiers have enlisted in the army of state that has repressed their political or ethnic group.

A small literature exists on such soldiers. Foremost is Alon Peled's *A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower in Multi-ethnic States*, which looks at three case studies: Israel, apartheid South Africa, and post-independence Singapore. Peled's titular 'question' refers to how elites in such societies have perennially raised what he terms the 'Trojan Horse dilemma': 'if allowed into the military, will young ethnic soldiers become Trojan horses, or will they serve loyally?'.[156] Peled argues that there is a 'causal relationship' between how professional a military force is and how equitably it treats troops from disadvantaged groups.[157] For Peled, the history of regular military forces demonstrates that a 'professional' approach that emphasises the fair treatment of soldiers and a gradual approach to integration engenders loyalty: 'whenever and wherever they were given a chance, ethnic soldiers have served their countries loyally, including on the battlefield'.[158]

Peled argues that even in the most discriminatory societies, the regular army can still be a (relatively) equitable institution. This exceptionalism is the product of its adherence to 'professional' norms, which generate loyalty among soldiers (i.e. his use of this term is very similar to what I have termed micro-level loyalties). For Peled, these loyalties are powerful enough to supersede other factors that would ordinarily be expected to be corrosive to soldierly loyalty, such as the stigma of 'collaborating' in the colonial army, or a soldier's fear of their family being persecuted as a result of their service. Peled's argument is rooted in a rather mercenary martial logic: he advises hypothetical officers serving in the military of such a state to 'sell' the ethnic integration of their forces to sceptical politicians by emphasising its 'combat performance rewards' rather than aspects of 'social justice'.[159] His argument supports the notion that, in such contexts, the army as an institution can form an enduring 'social contract' with its soldiers, which facilitates the creation of a macro-level bond of loyalty between soldiers and the army itself, rather than the state. So long as the army abides by its professional norms and treats these soldiers fairly, these bonds of loyalty will endure.[160]

[155] See, for instance, Coelho, 'African Troops in the Portuguese Colonial Army', p. 136; Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, pp. 49–50, 82.
[156] Peled, *Question of Loyalty*, pp. 2, 172. [157] Ibid., p. 10. [158] Ibid., p. 173.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Aside from this 'professional' argument, Peled does not explicitly discuss how soldierly loyalties are formed nor how they are manifested. Such ambiguity is also found in several other scholarly texts published on troops recruited from minority, marginalised,

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Peled's case studies also highlight a further, important aspect of macro-level loyalties. It is clear that the loyalties of troops drawn from marginalised communities are not borne of a macro-level political or ideological affinity for the regime, be it colonial, settler-colonial, or otherwise oppressive (as I will argue, the men of the RAR did not support the Smith regime, or minority rule, whatsoever). Nor do the loyalties of marginalised soldiers signal uncritical endorsement of discrimination or oppression. Instead, these loyalties were often a strategy of acquiring improved rights, both individually and collectively, through military sacrifice.

Understanding of the loyalties of minority soldiers was bolstered by the 2008 publication of Rhoda Kanaaneh's *Surrounded: Palestinian Soldiers in the Israeli Military*, which uses interviews conducted with seventy-two members, or veterans of, the Israeli security forces.[161] For marginalised Palestinians, enlisting in the military, despite being 'unpopular and rare', offers one of the only viable routes to acquire citizenship and 'lies at the extreme of a continuum of Palestinian strategies that range from collaboration and informing all the way to armed struggle against the state'.[162]

Palestinian soldiers who enlist to pursue this route of social mobility, and their families, are stigmatised in a manner comparable to how black Rhodesian soldiers were, suffering attacks in their home areas and sometimes being housed elsewhere in response.[163] Arab soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are often concentrated in the lowest ranks and have few opportunities for promotion beyond a 'glass ceiling', a source of great frustration.[164] Yet this discrimination is juxtaposed with the *relative* meritocracy available within the IDF: as one 'Arab soldier . . . who complained of the ethnic limitations he faced within the Israeli military [stated,] "As bad as it is in there, I only wish we would be treated the same way outside the military"'.[165] This further supports the notion that, so long as an army adheres to the tenets of 'professionalism' and fulfils the

overseas, or suppressed communities. See, for example, Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*; Krebs, *Fighting for Rights*; Ware, *Military Migrants*; Johnson, *True to Their Salt*.

[161] The number of actual soldiers Kanaaneh interviewed is ambiguous – while she states that 'between 2000 and 2005', she interviewed 'seventy-two' members of the security forces (pp. 70, 113), her interviewees were not solely drawn from the IDF, but also from the police and border guards. She argues that the distinctions between these groups are immaterial, insisting from a functionalist perspective that the loyalties and everyday experiences of soldiers, policemen, and border guards are similar, and that she thus often uses 'the term soldiers to refer to what were, in fact, policemen, Border Guards, and members of the military of varying rank' (p. 114), a point with which I do not agree, given my argument that soldierly loyalties are exceptional. While references to 'soldiers' within Kanaaneh's text are often to members of other services, I have only used quotes from her book in which she specifically refers to soldiers in the IDF. Kanaaneh, *Surrounded*, pp. 70, 113–15.

[162] Ibid., pp. 6–7. [163] Ibid., pp. 18, 24. [164] Ibid., pp. 70–1. [165] Ibid., p. 97.

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obligations of its 'social contract', soldiers drawn from marginalised communities will remain loyal.

Elsewhere, the macro-level loyalties of marginalised soldiers to the state is often ambivalent. As Roger Reese argued when writing of Soviet soldiers who fought for the Red Army despite their contempt for Stalinism, macro-level loyalties oft described as 'patriotic' in fact span an array of emotive attachments towards the army and the state:

> In the larger picture of people at war and their manifestation and internalization of patriotism it is very possible for people to fight for a country whose leadership they do not like, or whose policies negatively affect them personally. The Neisei in the United States for example, dispossessed and disenfranchised, were recruited out of internment camps and formed the all-volunteer 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which became the most decorated unit of its size in the United States Army in World War II. The Tuskegee airmen, the men of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 777th Artillery Battalion, and all the other African-American men and women who served the United States armed forces were in no way endorsing the segregation and discrimination of Jim Crow society . . . In fact, people can fight for their country with the hope that their efforts will, in the post war years, change the social and political order.[166]

Reese's insights here are striking, and his notion of 'patriotism' as a spectrum which can incorporate a rejection of a regime in power, and a belief among soldiers that their service will reform the discriminatory practices of the state, is useful in thinking about soldiers who come from marginalised groups.

Similarly, in 1979, a black sergeant in the South African Army stated that 'now, after fighting, we have a right to claim our share in (this country), alongside the white man'.[167] In 1987, the first Druze general in the IDF also advocated that military loyalty could influence how the state treated the marginalised:

> [T]he young Druze have to realise that our future progress depends on our [military] progress [i.e. performance in combat units, and as specialists and officers]. We must not fail. If we fail, doors will be closed. If we succeed more doors will be opened . . . We must not forget that Israel is a young country, and if we Druze look around the world at other peoples in our situation we can see that they did not reach every position of authority overnight. It took time.[168]

One of Kanaaneh's Palestinian interviewees expressed a similar sentiment. Commenting on how 'recently some Druze have reached very high ranks, ranks we could not dream of before', he argued that 'it is not unrealistic that in ten, fifteen, or twenty years there will be real

[166] Reese, 'Motivations to Serve', pp. 266–8.
[167] Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 222. [168] Peled, *Question of Loyalty*, pp. 162–3.

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decision makers in this state who are Arab'.[169] Colonial and marginalised soldiers have forged macro-level loyalty to the army, rather than the state, as the army is perceived as a reasonably fair institution which offers a path to social mobility that would otherwise be closed. This dynamic recalls the regimental song of the Natal Native Horse, sung more than a century ago, in which its soldiers expressed their wish to 'receive loyalty's fair reward'.[170] As I will show later, my interviewees perceived the Rhodesian Army's (glacial) reforms of the late 1970s as indicative that their service could produce change.

Furthermore, this 'patriotic' spectrum has been observed as incorporating nuanced loyalties on part of colonial soldiers that distinguish between the state and the government of the day. In their own renderings of their service to the state, soldiers from oppressed groups have often portrayed their soldiering as inherently apolitical, a term I define in this book as making a distinction between the state's institutions and the policies of the incumbent regime. These narratives, prevalent among colonial or marginalised troops, are crafted to depoliticise their service and exculpate them from moral judgement, while simultaneously recognising that the state they serve has been fundamentally compromised by the political interests of the regime, and expressing hope that this will change in the future. For instance, some of Kanaaneh's interviewees in the IDF advanced a 'motivation of defending the state, the law', rather than the interests of settlers.[171] Black Rhodesian soldiers also argued fulsomely that they served the government of the day and that they were apolitical soldiers whose allegiance was not to the settler state or the Smith regime.

In summary, it is important to recognise that the factors which motivated colonial soldiers to enlist were typically not the same as the loyalties that sustained them during wartime. I have divided these loyalties into micro-level ('professional') and macro-level ('regimental loyalties') solidarities. 'Professional' loyalties, as set out by King, not only incorporate high levels of soldierly proficiency, but also denote the powerful mutual obligations that exist among regular troops, which create a distinctive solidarity.

At the macro level, it is important to understand the loyalties of colonial soldiers as shaped by the particular 'military culture' of the army, which serves to create 'in-group solidarity' among members of a regiment. It is to the army that colonial soldiers' wider loyalties were pledged, which were not simply bonds of obedience, as the 'social contract' inherent to

[169] Kanaaneh, *Surrounded*, p. 19. [170] Thompson, 'Loyalty's Fair Reward', p. 656.
[171] Kanaaneh, *Surrounded*, pp. 19–20.

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this loyalty was continually negotiated. These loyalties rendered soldiers fundamentally distinct from other kinds of paramilitary combatants who allied with colonial authorities. As Kanaaneh argued, contrary to the view that soldiers' loyalties 'are often regarded as primordial', they are in fact 'contingent and shifting', and can be vested in a seemingly paradoxical manner.[172] These other cases of colonial and marginalised soldiers further understanding of the strategies such troops used to negotiate their circumstances, and how they understood their own loyalties and told stories about them.

Much of this literature on colonial soldiers or soldiers from marginalised groups can only, however, speculate as to the specific ways in which such loyalties were forged at the micro and macro levels. Aside from a handful of notable examples such as the work of Bolliger and Kanaaneh, the emergent literature has not had sufficient evidence, and specifically oral historical sources, to explore the views of rank-and-file soldiers themselves. Such sources are rare and difficult to access. In the next section, I set out my own methodological approach to these questions.

Methodological Challenges and Approaches

The task of researching black Rhodesian veterans was complex. Many colonial-era documents have been destroyed or stolen, although a fragmentary form of the colonial archive remains. However, this book foregrounds the views of black veterans, making an oral history approach particularly suitable. In the latter part of this chapter, I discuss the process I undertook in making contact with these veterans and how I established a research relationship with them.

In Zimbabwe, historians have struggled to access much of the colonial archive relevant to the war, as Rhodesian officials coordinated the mass destruction of official records as the war came to its end, including the entirety of the archives of the Special Branch and the Central Statistical Office, and 'Rhodesian army and policy files [which were] either burnt in a great holocaust of documents or smuggled to South Africa'.[173] These acts of censorship mirrored British de facto policy during the era of decolonisation, which was to undertake the organised removal or destruction, often on an industrial scale, of records deemed politically sensitive.[174]

[172] Ibid., pp. 15–16.
[173] Pandya, *Mao Tse-tung and Chimurenga*, p. 10; Moorcraft and McLaughlin, *Rhodesian War*, p. 183; Bhebe and Ranger, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[174] Banton, 'Destroy?'.

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I have been told that the motive for the removal of the Rhodesian archive to South Africa was the same 'lack of trust in the new Zimbabwean regime' that saw many items of RAR regimental property moved to Durban in 1981.[175] Some of the smuggled Rhodesian material has periodically and belatedly surfaced. In the early 2000s, the Rhodesian Army Association, 'an all-white veterans' organisation based outside Zimbabwe',[176] acquired at least some of the smuggled Rhodesian Army files.

This archive was transported from South Africa to Britain and for a brief time was made available to scholars as the 'Rhodesian Army Archive' (RAA) within the now-defunct British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol, which closed to the public in 2008.[177] The archive was not thought comprehensive: 'the dearth of, for example, personnel records suggests that many documents were destroyed prior to the 1980 elections'.[178]

I have been informed that the RAA is now once again in the private possession of Rhodesian Army Association veterans. Its illicit custodians allow only their preferred researchers access to it; such texts include Charles Melson's recently published *Fighting for Time*.[179] The holders of the RAA have refused to return it to its rightful owner, the NAZ. Thus the records sit in limbo. At least one academic library has refused the deposit of the stolen RAA, and its intransigent holders remain unwilling to return it.[180]

During my research, foreign scholars were not allowed to access the NAZ without acquiring a research permit, the granting of which had become near impossible. In lieu of access to this archive, I carried out research at the Cory Library for Historical Research at Rhodes University in South Africa, which houses a vast collection of Rhodesian Government Cabinet papers held in Ian Smith's own archive, dating from 1962 to 1978. This archive – often referred to as the 'Smith Papers' – afforded me great insight into the government and army's changing policies towards black soldiers in the army, demonstrating the increasing Rhodesian dependence upon black soldiers and how the settler authorities

[175] See Binda, *Masodja*, pp. 398–9. [176] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 14.
[177] Banton, 'Destroy?', p. 323. [178] Flood, *Brothers-in-Arms?*, p. 7.
[179] Melson, *Fighting for Time*.
[180] I am grateful to Yagil Henkin for allowing me to see his photographs of parts of this archive that he took before it was closed. However, I have utilised only two RAA documents in this book, as those excerpts comprise only top-level Rhodesian discussions of national military strategy at the end of the war. I have also used secondary citations from other texts that had access to the RAA. It is highly likely that more relevant material pertaining to the RAR exists in the RAA, but no other academics I contacted who had accessed the RAA could furnish me with copies.

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implemented policies and slow reforms to maintain their 'social contract' obligations to black soldiers.[181] I also accessed papers belonging to Ken Flower, held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, which provide insight into the discussions among Rhodesian securocrats and politicians.

During my research, I also acquired access to four copies of the RAR's journal, *Nwoho: The Rhodesian African Rifles Regimental Magazine*, published between 1976 and 1978. These are invaluable, for they contain first-hand accounts written by black soldiers during the war. These accounts are short, unvarnished descriptions of life in the wartime RAR, and some are startling for their candid discussion of wartime violence. Stapleton drew upon some of these accounts too, and argued that 'these statements reveal the typical bravado of young men', and that although they 'were published as propaganda, it seems reasonable that, given the wartime context, they accurately reflected soldiers' opinions. If white Rhodesians made these statements, their veracity would not be questioned'.[182]

Having spent hundreds of hours with black Rhodesian veterans, I agree with Stapleton's assessment that these accounts accurately reflect some RAR soldiers' opinions. However, I disagree with his depiction of them as propaganda. *Nwoho* was clearly modelled on the regimental journals long published by British regiments, and is strikingly similar in tone, style, and presentation. Its contents are a mixture of accounts of regimental life, sporting successes, heartfelt tributes to lost comrades, crude masculine jokes, regimental history, accounts of previous wars, gallows humour, detailed accounts of operations, and relentless teasing of other soldiers and subunits. *Nwoho* was clearly not intended for a wide distribution beyond members of the regiment and its veterans, and I argue that it should therefore not be considered mere propaganda.

However, *Nwoho* was also obviously not impartial. It clearly reflected the views of the white RAR officers who edited it. It is highly likely that contributions would have been solicited only from keen soldiers possessed of high morale, whereas the accounts of dissenting or demoralised troops would not have been included. *Nwoho*, while portraying the RAR's particular perspective, also reflected the 'official mind' of the army, as it was subject to the military censor, sometimes to the chagrin of its contributors. For instance, a white RAR company commander lamented that

[181] The Smith Papers contained plentiful documents on organisational and administrative matters relating to the Rhodesian Army and were of great use to me. However, it was clear that the Smith Papers had been thoroughly pruned of potentially controversial or sensitive material prior to deposit at Rhodes University, a similar process that many researchers think occurred with the RAA.

[182] Stapleton, *African Police and Soldiers*, p. 201.

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his contribution to a previous issue had been excised owing to the 'censor's scrutiny'.[183] Thus, while *Nwoho* was not simply propaganda, it was clearly biased to the official views of white army officers, and it cannot be considered representative of the views of all black soldiers. Nonetheless, it provides an unparalleled contemporary insight into key aspects of black soldiers' lives in their own words and provides rich – and sometimes surprisingly candid – detail as to their wartime experiences that would otherwise be unavailable.

While useful, the archival sources were not as plentiful as I wished and, *Nwoho* aside, did not allow insight into the views of rank-and-file black soldiers. Others researching the loyalties of black soldiers who fought for settler-colonial regimes have faced similar problems. Writing in 1976 on African soldiers in Portugal's colonial armies, Douglas Wheeler argued that 'distressingly little is known about African morale, esprit de corps, promotion, discipline, and racial attitudes and conflicts among groups'.[184] Bolliger likewise argued, more than forty years later, we still know little about the 'tens of thousands of Africans [who] fought in the security forces of the settler and colonial regimes', despite 'their significant impact on southern Africa's military and political history'.[185] This has largely been the result of a lack of access to relevant evidence. For instance, Grundy wrote an excellent book on black soldiers in the apartheid-era South African Army, but he readily acknowledged that his data was limited to documentary sources and elite interviews.[186] Works on other contexts have also, out of necessity, tended to rely on documentary sources.[187]

However, in accounts of the end of colonialism, historians have frequently turned to methods that look beyond the official record in order to tell a fuller story.[188] Oral histories, in particular, have long provided 'an essential corrective' to official records produced by racist states and societies,[189] and scholars of the transnational conflicts of liberation in southern Africa have also found oral histories fruitful where little or no written records are available.[190]

[183] 'C Company (Chamuka Inyama) Notes', *Nwoho* (October 1977), p. 45.
[184] Wheeler, 'African Elements in Portugal's Armies', p. 242.
[185] Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, pp. 1–2.
[186] Grundy, *Soldiers without Politics*, p. 23.
[187] See, for instance, Gortzak, 'Using Indigenous Forces'; Peled, *A Question of Loyalty*; McLaughlin, 'Victims As Defenders'. An exception is Crapanzano's *Harkis*, an ethnography of Algerian colonial veterans and their children, in which the author interviewed former auxiliaries, some of whom had previously served in the French Army during World War II or the First Indochina War.
[188] See Stockwell, 'Decolonisation'; Thomas and Doron, 'Out of Africa', pp. 5–8.
[189] Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p. 81.
[190] White and Larmer, 'Introduction'.

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Bolliger's book is a watershed moment, as it looks at the histories of black soldiers through 'their own accounts – a new methodological approach to the study of African soldiers of colonial and settler armies'.[191] For historians writing on the history of wars and soldiers, 'allowing the combatants to speak for themselves' is imperative, particularly if we are to seek out 'the voice of the common man', rather than solely those of senior commanders.[192] The individual narratives of soldiers 'work at a level below the big words and the brave sentiments, down on the surface of the earth where men fight. They don't glorify war, or aestheticize it, or make it literary or heroic; they speak in their own voices, in their own plain language'.[193] Paul Thompson, the doyen of oral history, argued that oral history has 'been particularly important in illuminating ordinary experience' of the military rank and file.[194]

Oral history is thus a powerful method for exploring the history of black Rhodesian soldiers, and especially their own views on their loyalties. Yet it must also be recognised that oral histories have their own biases. As the social anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin argued, oral testimonies suffer from the same weaknesses of fallibility and inaccuracy as textual sources, and are 'not intrinsically more or less likely to be accurate than a written document'.[195] The context of the interview and the positionality of the teller and researcher are important factors.

My interviewees were soldiers who were treated relatively well by the Rhodesian government. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that they look more favourably upon the Rhodesian era than many civilians. Nonetheless, these recollections should not be mistaken for approval of minority rule. As Luisa Passerini, who chronicled the Italian working class under Fascism, argued, 'acceptance of the social order should not be confused with approval of the regime', and cautioned historians not to repeat the mistakes of predecessors who had failed to be mindful of the subjectivity of their interviewees.[196]

Other scholars have stressed the context of the interview. For instance, Tonkin argued that all oral histories are, fundamentally, both socially constructed and conditioned by the boundaries of acceptable discourse: 'the product of canons of appropriateness and rhetorical stereotypes'.[197] In other words, my interviewees' testimonies sought to justify their military service in a manner acceptable in the political and social context of almost forty years after independence. Their narratives cannot be divorced from the prevailing political wind in Zimbabwe, in which the

[191] Bolliger, *Apartheid's African Soldiers*, p. 325. [192] Keegan, *Face of Battle*, p. 32.
[193] Hynes, *Soldiers' Tale*, p. 30. [194] Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, pp. 15, 69.
[195] Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*, p. 160.
[196] Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*, p. 6. [197] Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*, p. 45.

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ZANU(PF) government has largely portrayed service in the Rhodesian Army as a form of heinous 'collaboration' since the onset of the country's post-2000 'crisis', as discussed later.

Aside from the meta-story of my interviewees' recollections, the accuracy of recalled events is also fallible. It is commonplace for the memories of veterans to vary enormously, and they diverge even amongst members of the same unit who collectively experienced the same events. As Bao Ninh wrote of North Vietnamese Army veterans:

> We had shared all the vicissitudes, the defeats and victories, the happiness and suffering, the losses and gains. But each of us had been crushed by the war in a different way. Each of us carried in his heart a separate war which in many ways was totally different, despite our common cause. We had different memories of people we'd known and of the war itself.[198]

Such fragmented recollections are not uncommon, particularly in retrospect. Stephen Davis, in his history of Umkhonto we Sizwe, noted how the accounts of struggle participants were often 'frustratingly contradictory' and that it is difficult to arrive at any '"comprehensive truth" of the armed struggle'.[199] The solution, Davis argued, is not 'to attempt to cobble together some patchwork account that achieves a probable accuracy', but rather to interpret how these memories are interwoven with prevailing historical winds, predominant narratives, and the personal circumstances of the storytellers themselves.

While acknowledging the malleable nature of personal testimony, we must also be wary not to throw the baby out with the bathwater and remember that even though memories are modulated by circumstances, they are nonetheless recollections of real events and are frequently very accurate. Furthermore, they are often the only source available.[200] As Thompson argued, historians should interpret oral testimony:

> Neither with blind faith, nor with arrogant scepticism, but with an understanding of the subtle processes through which all of us perceive, and remember, the world around us and our own part in it. It is only in such a sensitive spirit that we can hope to learn the most from what is told to us.[201]

Adopting such an understanding, I attempted to ground my interviewees' recollections not only in their own meta-story, but also in my own understanding of the history of the war and the military context, situated in a deep reading of the secondary literature, Rhodesian archives, and interviews already conducted with other veterans. By adopting this

[198] Ninh, *Sorrow of War*, p. 232. [199] Davis, *The ANC's War against Apartheid*, p. 2.
[200] Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*, p. 8.
[201] Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p. 116.

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approach, I sought to emulate Passerini, who utilised non-oral sources to 'follow up on what had been said' during interviews, in order to facilitate a process of 'supporting or refuting the oral evidence'.[202]

Interview Practicalities

Approaching military veterans and finding further interviewees through snowballing have often posed significant practical difficulties.[203] As Zoe Flood noted in 2005, black Rhodesian veterans 'are not only tremendously difficult to locate, due to the time lapse since the end of the war, but they are understandably reluctant to claim an association with the Smith regime, particularly given the current climate of political intimidation in Zimbabwe'.[204] My own research commenced a decade later, and these difficulties had only increased.

The fear of reprisals from those aligned with ZANU(PF) persists among some veterans, although in a less intense form than in the recent past, as discussed shortly. This fear, alongside the enduring stigma surrounding association with the colonial state, has had a chilling effect on this aspect of the history of Zimbabwe's liberation war. As Mazarire argued:

> Oral archives of Zimbabwe's war still remain lopsided because researchers are yet to transcend the stereotypes invented about this war defining heroes and collaborators. For this reason also, researchers have been unable to win the confidence and access information from those long considered to be on the 'wrong' side of the war.[205]

The difficulty of making contact with interviewees and establishing confidence initially hindered my ability to carry out oral history research. In late 2015, I sent tentative enquiries to the email addresses displayed on the website of the UK-based RAR Regimental Association, stating the nature of my research and asking how I could meet with black RAR veterans in Zimbabwe. This was met with a mixture of silence and refusal.

I was told by a member of the Association that its members did not want 'another bloody Marxist like Terry Ranger' writing a history of 'their regiment' and that its members deemed all researchers and academics axiomatically biased against them.[206] This was a clear echo of the colonial-era contempt for scholarship among many of the Rhodesian elite,

[202] Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory*, p. 9.
[203] Liebenberg, 'Evolving Experiences', p. 58; Moore, 'In-Depth Interviewing', pp. 117, 127.
[204] Flood, *Brothers-in-Arms?*, p. 8.
[205] Mazarire, 'Rescuing Zimbabwe's "Other" Liberation Archives', p. 10.
[206] The noted historian Terence Ranger wrote many well-regarded books on Zimbabwe. Once a lecturer at the University of Rhodesia, he was deported by the Rhodesian government in 1963 for his support of Zimbabwean nationalism.

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who disdainfully referred to the University of Rhodesia as the 'Kremlin on the Hill'. As noted earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 2, some white Rhodesian veterans have utilised their control of archival documents in an attempt to influence a favourable historical narrative.

It seems, however, that my initial enquiry email was circulated among RAR Association members, as shortly afterwards a sympathetic individual emailed me to say that while the Association would 'not lift a finger' to help me, they would pass me the details of an RAR veteran in Zimbabwe, but only if the veteran and his UK-based daughter consented, which they subsequently did.

Thereafter I made contact with TM in late 2015, and he kindly agreed to be interviewed for my fieldwork when I visited Zimbabwe. I am indebted to TM, a kind, scholarly man who vouched for me among other veterans. This trust was a highly important factor in other veterans granting interviews to me, and in this respect, I learned the lessons of the military anthropologist Dirk Kruijt, who noted the importance of 'interviewing on the basis of shared confidence ... generated by the introduction via a dependable intermediary that the researcher is reliable'.[207] This bolstered my credibility with potential interviewees immensely.

My second vital intermediary was Verity Mundy, introduced to me by a mutual friend in Bulawayo during 2017. From the outset, Verity's deep commitment to the welfare of these forgotten veterans was evident. She generously provided me with assistance in contacting and meeting veterans and with essential practical guidance as to how to arrange interviews and contact more veterans.

In a turn of events, during this period of fieldwork in Zimbabwe, I also met several members of the RAR Association in person. In a reversal of my initial experience with some other members, those I met in Zimbabwe were friendly, interested in my research, and generous with their time, providing me with introductions to several interviewees.

I interviewed the greatest number of veterans in Matabeleland. This did not reflect a bias towards isiNbebele speakers: most of these veterans had not grown up in the region, but had been posted to the RAR depot at Llewellin Barracks or one of the other military sites clustered around Bulawayo during their career, and had settled in their surrounds upon retirement. I also interviewed black veterans in Harare, Gweru, Masvingo, and Mutare, both from the RAR and other regiments. In total I interviewed fifty-four former Rhodesian soldiers. Additional participants were happy to discuss their service with me but did not wish to be

[207] Kruijt, 'Research on Latin America's Soldiers', p. 158.

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formally interviewed; others did not wish their interview to be recorded or have notes taken. From these 'non-interviews', I have only drawn context.

I met many interviewees through snowball sampling. Many preferred to meet me away from where they lived owing to the suspicion that meeting with a white foreigner would create within their neighbourhoods. During interviews, many recalled comrades they had served with who were 'now late', and the number of veterans dwindles every year. The World Bank Group put life expectancy in Zimbabwe at sixty-two in 2020; in the early 2000s, it was as low as forty-three. Some of the veterans I interviewed have since passed away.

I interviewed just four women, all the wives of soldiers. This reflects the fact that black soldiers in the Rhodesian Army were exclusively male, mirroring contemporary trends where 'up to the 1970s, even during periods of war, women played a minor role' in armies that adhered to Western norms and 'almost without exception, they served in nursing and administrative roles'.[208] I had hoped to interview more wives of soldiers, but unfortunately this was not often possible, as my interviewees generally travelled alone to meet me, again to avoid arousing suspicion.

Given my reliance upon snowballing to locate interviewees, selection bias was a pitfall I was conscious of from the outset. This is, however, an intrinsic drawback of researching veterans who have been retired for decades, as the military historian Brenda Moore noted in her own work on World War II–era US Air Force veterans,[209] as many have moved around the country or lost contact with former comrades. Snowballing was the only possible way of conducting this research given that the sole organisation in possession of a comprehensive list of the names and contact details of Rhodesian Army veterans is the Zimbabwean government, which was unlikely to assist in this research.

As Mazarire has argued, winning the confidence of black veterans of the Rhodesian army has long been difficult for researchers. My interviewees explained their willingness to speak to me about their service for three reasons: first that their story has been ignored, grossly misrepresented, or simply silenced, which has frustrated and saddened them, with some commenting that as a result they have concealed their time as a soldier even from their own grandchildren. I got the sense during many interviews that speaking of their past was cathartic for veterans. Many were pleased a foreigner had taken an interest in their history and were keen to contribute their memories. Several mentioned that they hoped it would serve as a corrective to the reductive and polarised narratives that all too frequently dominate such discussions.

[208] King, *Combat Soldier*, p. 383. [209] Moore, 'In-Depth Interviewing', p. 126.

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Secondly, some explained that the passage of time has dimmed the controversy surrounding black participation in the Rhodesian Army a little, and that while their service may still be contentious, compared to a decade ago, the stigma is less intense, given that many of those who were participants in the war or lived through it have now passed away. Most of my interviewees still opted to be anonymous to stay on the safe side, and stated that this was a habit of sensible precaution, rather than stemming from a feeling that their ex-Rhodesian Army status posed imminent danger. Others were happy for their full names to be used. However, I have anonymised all of my interviewees so as to err on the side of caution.

Thirdly, many stated that their own diminishing numbers and advancing age posed a risk that their side of the story could well be lost for good if it was not recorded. Roy experienced this when he attempted to interview colonial Indian Army veterans in 2002, but could find only a handful, most of whom by then 'were in their late eighties' and 'seemed to remember little. At best they could say they served in Burma or Italy'.[210] This desire to have one's military service recorded in history concords with the observation made by Kruijt, who noted that military veterans often articulated a sincere desire for an authoritative account of their lives and wartime deeds to be recorded for posterity.[211]

During preparation for fieldwork, I formulated a lengthy consent procedure that I rigidly adhered to at the commencement of each interview. Given my own positionality as a foreigner from a wealthy country, I took particular care to ensure that my interviewees were giving truly informed consent. I elaborated in considerable detail why I was conducting this research and how the data would be used. I made clear that I was a researcher and that my work was solely for academic purposes; that I had no contacts with either non-governmental or governmental organisations; and that taking part in this research would not result in any assistance, financial or otherwise.

This was of particular moral importance to me, for organisations of dubious integrity have made promises to these veterans in the past but not delivered on them. Furthermore, many veterans were also curious as to the size of the potential readership and keen that greater awareness be made for their wartime histories and post-war plight. I responded that much academic work takes years to be published, and its readership is often small and specialised, but that I hoped academic articles and a monograph would result, reaching a wider readership in time.

[210] Roy, 'Military Loyalty in the Colonial Context', p. 502.
[211] Kruijt, 'Research on Latin America's Soldiers', pp. 167–9.

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I do not speak any of Zimbabwe's languages aside from English. However, all of my interviewees spoke good English, meaning that translation was not necessary, with just two exceptions. One RAR veteran, MC, preferred to listen to my questions in English and then respond in chiShona through his son. MS, the wife of a veteran, preferred to both hear questions and give answers in chiShona – translation was carried out by her friend DC, himself a veteran.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 outlines the history of black troops in Rhodesia and in the Rhodesian Army, and argues that the RAR created in-group homogenisation through mimicking the regimental structure and pageantry of British colonial regiments. Invented traditions were important in establishing the regiment and the army as a focal point of soldiers' macro-level loyalties, in shaping its military culture, forming what I term the 'regimental loyalties' of black Rhodesian soldiers. I argue that in the early 1960s, the recruiting practices of the RAR and the focus of its training changed in response to the new government's preparation for an internal COIN war, which had particular implications for black soldiers' 'professionalism'.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the ethos of 'professionalism' was of key importance to the micro-level solidarities of black Rhodesian soldiers, and, drawing upon King, that their soldierly identities and 'professionalism' were co-constitutive. 'Professionalism' was forged through an intensive process of 'military socialisation' and reinforced through continuous training. 'Professional' soldiers were members of a distinctive military culture, which generated profound loyalties.

These loyalties were to an army that was systematically racist. As I argue in Chapter 4, this racism was pervasive, particularly in the higher levels of the army and government. It was only military necessity that influenced RF politicians and senior army officers to expand the number of black soldiers in the army and to improve their conditions of service in order to maintain the 'social contract'. As black soldiers became vital to the Rhodesian war effort, a clear desire not to violate the government's end of this contract is evidenced by the archive, and a slow process of reform occurred towards the end of the war, including the commissioning of black officers. The tenets of the 'professional' ethos were widely invoked to traverse the barriers of systematic racism, and within the particular military culture of the RAR, relationships between black and white troops were premised upon bonds of mutual respect, comradeship, and shared sacrifice.

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Chapter 5 argues that the impact of the war and combat was to cement these soldiers' loyalties and that the push and pull causal factors scholars have observed as underpinning desertion in other conflicts were largely not applicable to them. The RAR soldiers experienced a long war, and their own experiences of combat almost exclusively comprised battlefield success. Although this was partly explained by their high level of training and military proficiency, it also reflected the decisive military advantages, notably airpower, possessed by the RSF. Black soldiers' faith in their military prowess informed their perception that they would not lose the war. I argue that this experience of combat success, and a sense that they were winning the war, were important factors in their enduring loyalty. Furthermore, RAR soldiers came to perceive as their wartime role as moral and contrasted their self-portrayal as protectors of civilians with the guerrillas, who they asserted used violence towards rural people. This heightened in-group solidarity was further bolstered by widespread guerrilla targeting of off-duty soldiers and their families as the war intensified.

Black soldiers' conception of their own role as apolitical soldiers who fought for the government of the day instead of a political faction is the focus of Chapter 6. I argue that this apolitical ethos was fundamental to these troops' conception of their service, and that it was also informed by the Rhodesian government's vigorous policing of the politics of black soldiers. As the war intensified, and loyalty to the army became contentious, black soldiers articulated this conception of themselves as apolitical in order to portray their allegiance as not to the settler regime. This was also a subtle form of politicking in and of itself, designed to assure their post-independence safety and status – a strategy that was quite successful.

Chapter 7 highlights the importance of these soldiers' apolitical status and their professional and regimental loyalties during Zimbabwe's difficult first two years of independence, and how their actions during post-independence conflict assured their integration into the ZNA. It then reflects upon how black Rhodesian veterans' memories have been influenced by a form of nostalgia in the context of Zimbabwe's post-2000 crisis.

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