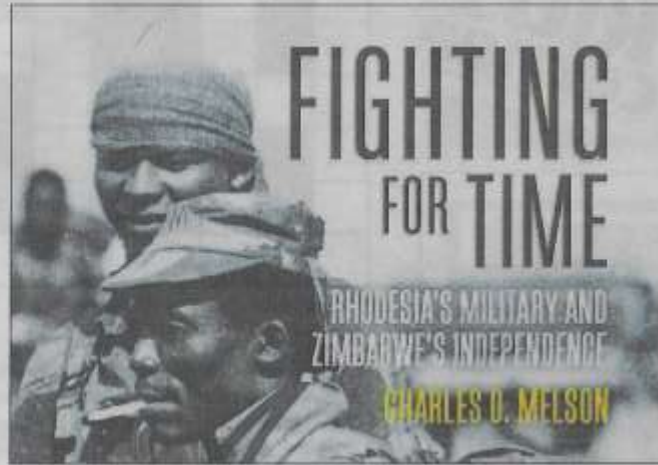


ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Local author writes about African conflicts

KENT ISLAND — Long time Kent Island resident Chuck Melson recently published a new work of history for those interested in the Cold War and African conflicts. "Fighting for Time: Rhodesia's Military and Zimbabwe's Independence" (Casemate, 2021) documents the last years of the Republic of Rhodesia in the decolonization of the continent as the "last colony" of the United Kingdom and Great Britain. It provides both an authoritative and readable account.

From the 1960s through 1970s, there were a series of conflicts in Africa involving Southern Rhodesia, South Africa, and Portugal in conflict with so-called Front-line States. There was an international element with the Cold War that saw American interest at the diplomatic, economic, and social level. In the post-Vietnam period, there was participation by individual American soldiers



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and politicians. Most of what has been published to date has been fashionable journalism, delayed academic work, narrow unit histories, or personal accounts that

lack balance or insights beyond the level of experience.

In part, this is because Rhodesian senior leaders did not leave memoirs or analysis and a belief

that the Rhodesian diplomatic and political situation was too unique to learn from.

The significance of this work is to be found in the transition of the Rhodesian armed services from a general-purpose force to a special operations force conducting intelligence driven operations. Original contributions were made at the level of "tactics, techniques, and procedures."

To answer the question whether there are lessons to learn from the study of this low-intensity conflict, this narrative was divided into several parts and chapters. The final chapter has the conclusions of what would be useful from the thesis question. The major theme found was the transition of the Rhodesian armed services from general-purpose forces to a special operations force conducting intelligence driven operations.

Author, Charles D. "Chuck" Melson was Chief Historian for

the U.S. Marine Corps at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps in Washington, DC, and the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia. Melson served as a joint historian with the U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and Intelligence Community. He wrote, co-authored, and edited official publications and series. He received the General Edwin Simmons-Henry Shaw Award for public historians, the General Leonard Chapman Medal for professional military educators, and the Rhodesian Independence Commemorative Medal.

His military experience includes 25 years as a U.S. Marine. Melson also has degrees in Liberal Arts from St. John's College, Annapolis and in History and Fine Arts from Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California. Married to Janet Pope, they have two children, David and Katherine.