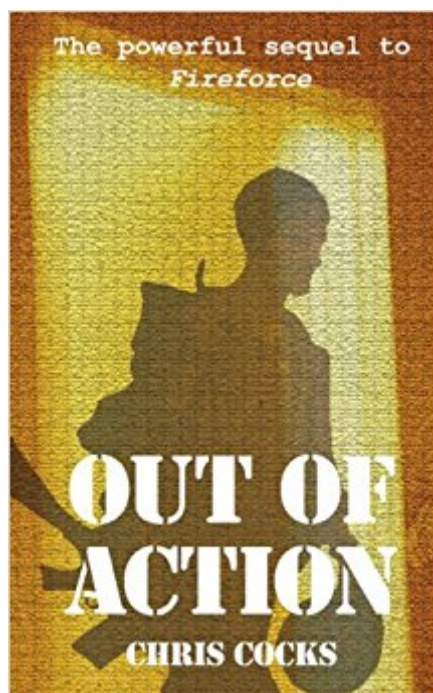


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# Out Of Action



## Synopsis

The powerful sequel to *Fireforce* Originally published as *Survival Course* in 1999, now long out of print, *Out of Action* is a reworked and updated edition, the sequel to the best-selling *Fireforce* — a lone man's war in the Rhodesian Light Infantry. The book is divided into two distinct parts: Part 1, *War*, chronicles Chris Cocks's final 16 months of combat in the Rhodesian bush war, as a stick leader in PATU, the Police Ant-Terrorist Unit. It is a time of unbelievable cruelty as the part-time white reservists battle overwhelming odds, without air support and — without a future, as Mugabe's ZANLA guerrillas swamp the country in the build-up to independence in 1980. Part 2, *Peace*, recounts the author's painful adjustment to life as a civilian — a fifteen-year odyssey in the embryonic state of Zimbabwe. It is an intensely personal journey in which the author pulls no punches as he describes his clumsy attempts to come to terms with a) the new dispensation of black Africa and b) himself. It is a *cri de couer*, the story of a young man, brutalized by war, who seeks escape in alcohol and drugs, and who, in the process, causes immeasurable pain and suffering to those around him. These too are the casualties of war. Ultimately, though, it is a story of hope, of a man's triumph over his own demons. Chris Cocks lives in Johannesburg. He is a partner in the recently established South African publishing house, 30° South Publishers. He is the author of *Fireforce* (now in its fourth edition); a novel, *Cyclone Blues*; and is the editor and compiler of *The Saints* — The Rhodesian Light Infantry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Chris Cocks is the author of Fireforce (now in its fourth edition, with sales exceeding 30,000 copies); Out of Action, a novel, Cyclone Blues; The Cheetah: 50th Anniversary Magazine of the RLI, and is co-author of The Saints: The Rhodesian Light Infantry and Africa's Commandos.

This is the sequel to FIREFORCE, this author's memoirs of his service in the RLI. If you have not read it, then do so before reading this. It is not only a far better book but you will not fully understand this one without doing so. "Out of Action" is split into two distinct parts. The first deals with the author's service, in the last year of the bush war, in a part time Police Anti Terrorist Unit, which he joins after leaving the Rhodesian Army in early 1979. It is a harrowing read. The author gives account of his involvement in some pretty awful stuff against unarmed harmless civilians, and ones he knew to be so, at that. His own commanding officer called him a murderer and threatened to have him hanged. In one respect I suppose you have to give him credit for owning up to what he did. At the time he had been brutalised by three years of war and I think he was insecure joining a new unit and did not want to look weak. It was another member of the stick who pressed for a hard line with curfew breakers. But still war crimes are war crimes and yes I suppose he should have been hanged. The writing is powerful. You feel like a stiff drink yourself after getting through some parts of it. Part Two of the book deals with the author's life after the war. His addictions, his marriage break up, his struggle to earn a living. I found it interesting from a social history point of view also, a view of Zimbabwe in the 80's and 90's. This man is a good writer and overall a good man but there were times, according to his own accounts in this book, he was one evil bastard.

I recently finished reading "Out of Action" by Chris Cocks and I must say it is a fantastic read and picks up where "Fireforce" left off very well. Chris writes in a style that is both captivating and relatable to the reader and this book is sure to be enjoyable not only to the Rhodesian History aficionado, but also those interested in reading military narratives. I highly recommend it, but suggest reading "Fireforce" first for context.

If you have read Fireforce, you need to read this book. Somewhat jumps around the more recent history, but the story around the fall of Rhodesia is well written. I wish he had gone into more detail on the post war stories, as there is much to be learned about how Mugabe's dictatorship operated even in the beginning. His arrest on trumped up charges is enough to make anyone shiver as to how easy it can be for something to go very wrong, and how hard it is for even to good people in the government cannot operate well when surrounded by thugs and crooks.

Knowing the author and what he went thru, I see the book as a good tool on how to get over the fight and not take fright at the sudden change in ones life and at such a young age. We have to realise what terrible memories and demons haunt us, who were so young and then had to try a normal life when we had only known abnormal ,after leaving school

An interesting, albeit slightly maudling, insight into the aftermath and personal losses paid due to that terrible bush war.

If this had been written as a novel it would be unbelievable. Amazing life story told in absolutely gripping fashion. Highly recommended. Alf Field

Cocks fought his demons and won. Interesting insight into PATU's last days.

A very honest and open book. It's very easy to hate, admire and like the author at the same time. I think it was brilliantly written and wish Mr Cocks all the luck in the future, you have lived some life and had an amazing story to tell

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