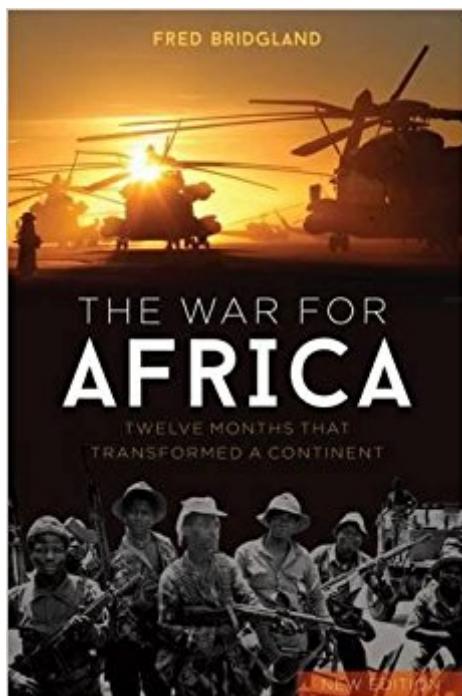


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The War For Africa: Twelve Months That Transformed A Continent



Synopsis

The story of the Cuban-South African war in Angola in 1987–88 through the eyes of the South Africans who fought in it. The Angolan Civil War lasted over a quarter of a century, from 1975 to 2002. Beginning as a power struggle between two former liberation movements, the MPLA and UNITA, it became a Cold War struggle with involvement from the Soviet Union, Cuba, South Africa and the USA. This book examines the height of the Cuban-South African fighting in Angola in 1987–88, when 3,000 South African soldiers and about 8,000 UNITA guerrilla fighters fought in alliance against the Cubans and the armed forces of the Marxist MPLA government, a force of over 50,000 men. Bridgland pieced together the course of the war, fought in one of the world's most remote and wild terrains, by interviewing the South Africans who fought it, and many of their accounts are woven into the narrative. This classic account of a Cold War struggle and its momentous consequences for the participants and across the continent, is released in a new edition with a new preface and epilogue.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A gripping text that highlights just how much political and social considerations dictate the outcome of war. A highly detailed work of military history, *The War for Africa* can tell us a lot about the nature of counter-insurgency warfare and how small states can become contested battlegrounds between superpowers.” (New York Journal of Books) “...a very impressive contribution, which will have its place across the world in studies of this theatre.” (Paul Trewella, South African Journalist and Commentator)

Fred Bridgland, a graduate of St Andrews University, is a British veteran foreign correspondent and author. He has reported on wars in India, Pakistan, the Middle East and Africa. In 1975 his discovery of South Africa's secret US-engineered invasion of Angola uncovered the CIA's involvement in one of Africa's longest wars, and was a world scoop. He has written a number of books, including Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa, and is currently writing a biography of Winnie Mandela.

As one who fought in some of the actions described in this book, I can attest from personal experience that Mr. Bridgland got it right in this book. I enjoyed the first edition when it was published several decades ago, and this new, updated edition improves on the first. Mr. Bridgland does an excellent job of tying together loose ends from all over the conflict zone, including the increasingly erratic behavior of Jonas Savimbi of UNITA, something of which most of us were unaware at the time. He accurately describes the battles involved (at least, he does the ones in which I was involved, so I presume the same factual accuracy applies to the others as well). He also positions the military action in the context of political developments at the time, including the impending collapse of the Soviet Union, which was to bring the Cold War to an end and reshape the destinies of many nations and individuals. The war in Angola during 1987-88 was a very hot part of the Cold War, one that's largely forgotten except by those involved. I'm pleased to see that this book has been reissued, and I hope many military men and military history buffs will enjoy learning about a period that shaped and formed my life in many ways.

This is a comprehensive, detailed, and careful history of this complex and tragic war, and the situation that spawned it. It is well worth reading if you have interest in the history of the area or the events that have shaped several generations.

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