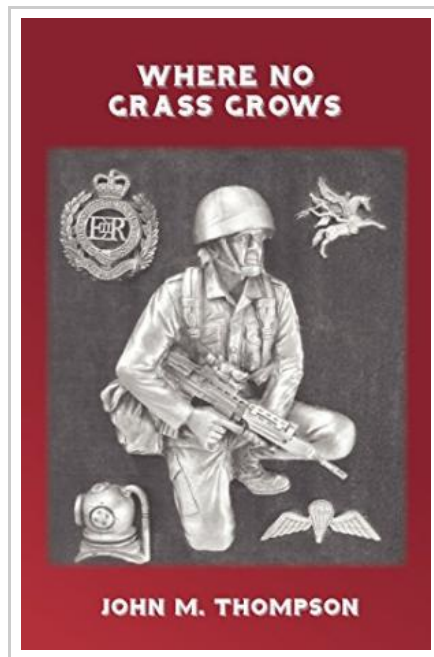




Where No Grass Grows

By John M. Thompson

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I was born during World War II. In the aftermath of the war, in Northern England as shipyards were laying men off in their thousands and the same in the mines. I learnt at a very early age the art of survival, as food was hard to come by. It soon became obvious to me that I also loved adventures, not knowing that is was the buzz of adrenalin guiding me. Aged 17, I joined the Parachute Regiment Territorial Army. This helped me to get through an unwanted apprenticeship in the shipyards. When I was aged twenty, I had had enough of the noisy, dirty shipyards. I joined the Regular Army in the Royal Engineers. After training, I then volunteered for a unit I had been recommended to named, 9th Independent Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers.

Parachute Engineers must complete first, three weeks of hell in the Squadrons pre- para, then the arduous P Company training, which entitles them to wear the famous Maroon Beret. This is to test the physical fitness, determination, and mental robustness of the soldier under conditions of stress, to determine whether...



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