Royal Air Force Historical Society

and

The RAF’s contribution to the Kenyan Mau Mau conflict 1953-56

Wg Cdr Steve Chappell
How to Join
Membership is open to anyone with an interest in RAF history, irrespective of whether they have ever had any direct connection with the Service

The Two Air Forces Award
The Historical Society established the Two Air Forces Award in collaboration with the United States Air Force Historical Foundation...

The Committee
The Committee of the RAF Historical Society consists of Serving, ex-serving and civilian personnel...

Next Event
The next event will be a seminar on ‘Guided Weapons’ to be held at the RAF Museum, Hendon on 1 April 2015.

Society journals
The Society’s back-catalogue of publications are made available on-line courtesy of the RAF Museum...

Links to AHB and RAF Museum
Links to the Air Historical Branch
Some of No 72 Sqn’s Bristsols wore this distinctive double-chevron marking.

Access to journals

Lt S D Macdonald with one of No 72 Sqn’s Spads.
The RAF’s contribution to the Kenyan Mau Mau conflict 1953-56

Wg Cdr Steve Chappell

03 February 2015
The efficacy of airpower?

- ‘Lancaster’ bombers bombed the Mau Mau’…!!
- ‘The RAF were called in to bomb and strafe the forests, though in the thick foliage and steep ravines, their contribution was probably more symbolic than efficacious’…[N Craven, Daily Mail article 22nd Oct 2002].
- ‘RAF not only alienated the local population, but it also did little to influence the Mau Mau…most of us preferred to work without noisy and dangerous air cover’.  [A Waters, Kenyan Police].
- ‘I saw no evidence that the bombing had any effect on the terrorists, not least because it was possible to hear the aircraft well before they arrived.’…[Brian Lees, Colonel ret’d [1st Bn Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Mount Kenya & Aberdares 1953-54].
Proportionality

- Crucial to apply and then enforce a strict policy of avoiding civilian casualties.

- ‘…[aircraft] will not take armed offensive action against any target outside the prohibited areas. It is emphasised that it is of the greatest importance that our own forces and loyal Africans should not be subjected to offensive action from the air.’ WO:276/233: Royal Air Force bombing raids: Emergency Directive No.6, 3/5/1953, 4.

- CAS, the Cabinet and Winston Churchill in some cases approved any bespoke operations.
## Coordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Number</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>Ordnance to be used</th>
<th>Target Marker</th>
<th>Time on target</th>
<th>RV position</th>
<th>Height of target (ft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 harvards</td>
<td>8x19lb plus straffing per ac</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A-1B</td>
<td>2 Lincoln</td>
<td>10x500lb bombs plus strafing per ac until 1455</td>
<td>1 Pacer</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>RZR2735</td>
<td>9200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A-2B</td>
<td>2 Lincoln</td>
<td>10x500lb bombs plus strafing per ac until 1525</td>
<td>1 Pacer</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Gura waterfall</td>
<td>9800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A-7B</td>
<td>2 Lincoln</td>
<td>10x500lb bombs plus strafing per ac until 1555</td>
<td>1 Pacer</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>Sasuma Dam</td>
<td>9000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7C</td>
<td>6 Harvard</td>
<td>8x19lb plus straffing per ac</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>9000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sky shouting Auster 6
ORE TENTODOL OFITE ELE SECURITY FORCES ENA PASY NAA KEYILOLE
ENCHERE NYIYEK NAA OYIIBE NYI ENILISANGA ILTUNGANA TENA NYOROROE NEJIK NAITAL.

ENINKO PEE IBIKOO

THE BEARER OF THIS PASS WISHES TO SURRENDER. He is to
be given fair treatment, food and medical attention if required. He will
be detained but is NOT to be prosecuted for any offence connected with
the Emergency which he may have committed prior to January 18th, 1955.

ANAYEBEBEB BARUA HII ANATAKA KUJITOLEA. MPE OSAADA
MWEMA, CHAKULA NA ATIBWE IKIWA ANAHITAJI. ATAFUNGINA LAKINI NATOAHA-
KIWA KWA AJILI YA UOVA WO WOTE WA MOU MAU ALIOFANYA MBELE YA JANUARI
18, MWAKA HUN WA 1955.

ORE OLOOTA ENA PALAI NAA KEYEUK NEISHOYO KEWAN
NCHOO ERETOTO NUNARE, ANAA, ENDAA, O ENBABA TENEYEU. EIKONIKI HAKE
MEGUANARE EKUENARAKI ENGAROISHO POKE E MOU MAU. NAIDIPA ALAADA
TEDOKOYA JANUARI 18 TEBE ATI IE 1955.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE ERSKINE
Commander-in-Chief

SIR EVELYN BARING
Governor
The efficacy of airpower?

‘...the alternative of not using the RAF would have been the employment of three Regiments of Artillery and another Infantry Bde,

...neither of which would have been a good answer and both considerably more expensive.’

‘Op HAMMER [extensive ops in the Aberdares Aug 54] would not have been possible without air support and the many supply drops conducted by the RAF’

‘I use the air forces to a maximum, but it is the kind of thing that cannot be supported with facts and figures.’

Lt Gen G Erskine GOC-in-C East Africa Apr 55.
‘...The chief characteristics of Air forces are flexibility and great hitting power. Flexibility enables targets to be hit anywhere in the operational area at short notice...[and] switch the emphasis of operations from one area to another without any administrative redeployment...

...The hitting power of bombs (particularly in the case of Lincolns) vastly increased the value of a successful contact ...

...whilst ground forces are being primarily directed against targets in the Reserves, heavy bombers and Harvards represent the chief weapon in our hands for attacking terrorists in the forest.’

Royal Air Force Historical Society
and
The RAF’s contribution to the Kenyan Mau Mau conflict 1953-56

Questions?

03 February 2015