

**Images of War  
The Royal Air Force in the Cold War 1950-1970**

Ian Proctor  
Pen & Sword  
£16.99  
ISBN 1783831898

Wartime allies quickly became Cold War adversaries at the end of World War Two, and by the 1950s the threat of a Soviet strike on Western Europe or Britain dominated military planning. Over the next 40 years, the Royal Air Force (RAF) was on the front line of the Cold War. In Britain and Germany aircrews exercised in preparation for a future conflict,

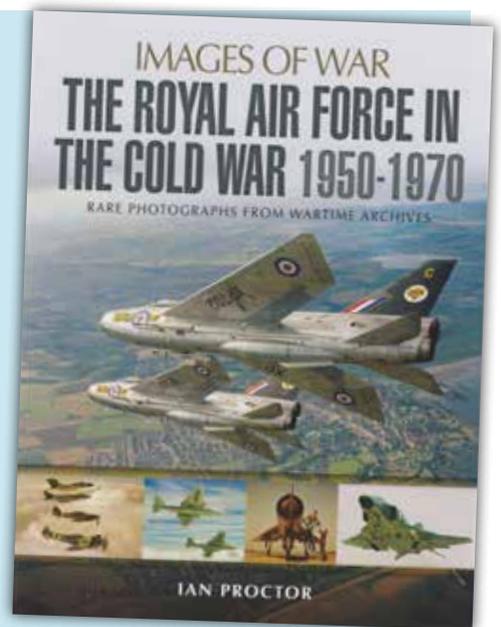
while fighter pilots stood by, ready to counter incursions by Soviet aircraft. Between 1956 and 1969 the elite nuclear bomber crews of the iconic V-Force trained to perform their ultimate mission, striking targets deep in the heart of Russia. It's only now that these former bomber crews realise their mission was likely to have been a one-way trip!

In protecting British interests overseas, personnel at stations across the Middle East and Far East were regularly engaged in supporting operations during the many colonial conflicts during the 1950s and 1960s. Performing these duties were a wealth of new British-designed aircraft that entered the vast ranks of RAF squadrons during the 1950s. These extraordinary

aircraft, which included the Hunter, Lightning, Vulcan and Canberra, became symbols of the Cold War and appeared in countless official RAF photographs, many of which are reproduced in the book.

Some 150 evocative images from the Air Ministry's remarkable photo archive are recorded in classic period colour and portray the RAF; its aircraft, personnel, operations and service life during some of the air force's most turbulent times.

Glenn Sands



**Beyond the Horizon  
Ian Shaw with Sérgio Santana**

Harpia Publishing  
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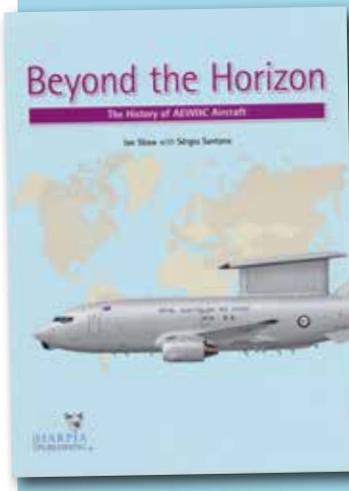
The very nature of Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft and its role dictates that nation operators keep accurate data on capabilities and vulnerabilities concealed from potential enemies. Disinformation and secrecy are frequently used when publishing available data on these platforms – especially about aircraft currently in

service around the world.

Such problems have not deterred authors Ian Shaw and Sérgio Santana from producing one of the definitive books to date on AEW&C platforms. Beginning with its development by the RAF in 1943, the book breaks down emerging capability into decades and shows how the US became leaders in detecting and classifying hostile aircraft during the early years of the Cold War. The US and its allies established the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in the 1950s, which proved to be a thorn in the side of the Russian Air Force as it struggled to acquire intelligence on the West.

Packed with detailed information, highlights of this book have to be the coverage of E-3 Sentry operations during the Gulf Wars. Surprisingly, the authors have included maps and charts showing the operational orbits of the USAF's E-3s during the air campaign. There is also an interesting account of an EC-121 Warning Star attempting to land on an aircraft carrier off the coast of North Vietnam during the war!

The book concludes with colour side profiles of AEW aircraft along with details on specifications, performance and operators. This book is an intelligence bonanza and is highly recommended. Glenn Sands



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**The British Aerospace Hawk  
A Photographic Tribute**

Michael Leek  
Pen & Sword  
£30.00  
ISBN 1781592942

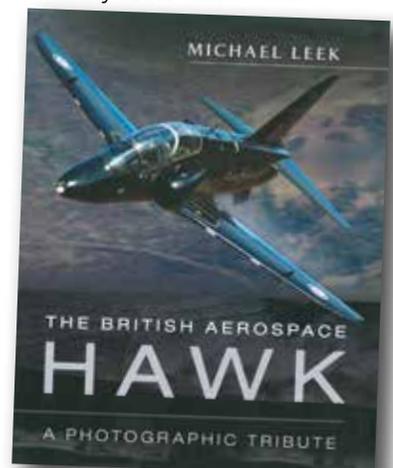
This is the first in a mini series of three photographic tributes dedicated to the BAE Systems Hawk jet trainer. The first volume focuses on those currently in service with the RAF – and herein lies the problem with any photographic tribute book on the Hawk because they are all now painted black.

Granted, there are a few exceptions and the author/photographer has done well to capture these rare examples on camera, but the largest section of this 250-page title is of Hawks flying at low level in Wales and Scotland. Yes, there are some great images here but they are mixed with familiar shots seen in magazines, aviation websites and RAF brochures – Hawks against a blurred valley backdrop. Accompanying the images are extensively well-written captions that even list the aircrews flying each Hawk illustrated – and that's some dedicated research by the author. It's clear Michael Leek has a deep affection for this jet trainer and the accompanying text explains the Hawk's development, technical specifications and the RAF's operational use in great

depth. But would it not have been a good choice to include some historic images at the start of the development section? RAF Hawks in the old red and white scheme from the 1980s for example?

I am not sure where this book's contents sits within an aviation collection. The author's knowledge of photography and his ability to photograph the jet trainer skilfully is without question. For those looking to do the same, the chapter on photographic equipment and the best vantage points from which to capture Hawks flying past will certainly help. But if you're looking for a definitive book on the Hawk, this is not it.

It's great to flick through but sadly is not *the* definitive reference title or photographic book. It may yet earn that accolade when combined with two volumes that remain to be published, but the privilege of owning the trio will cost you nearly £100. Glenn Sands



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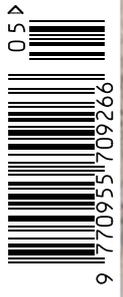
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