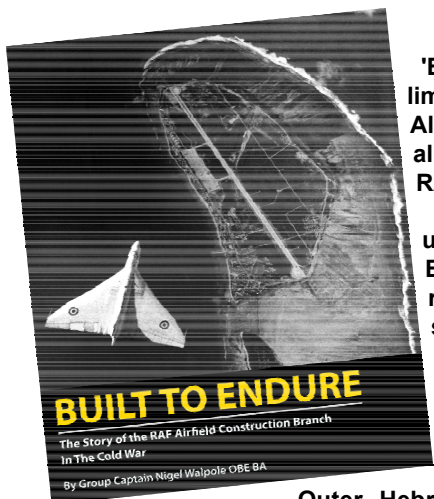


Built to Endure

The Story of the RAF Airfield Construction Branch In the Cold War

*by
Group Captain Nigel Walpole OBE BA*



'Built to Endure' tells the story of airmen who laboured outside the limelight to provide airfields and the facilities necessary to support Allied air power in the Cold War, and for the UK to exercise its national responsibilities world-wide. They were the unsung heroes of the RAF Airfield Construction Branch (ACB).

The ACB came to life in 1948, and was soon committed heavily to urgent work on airfields and associated installations needed for the Berlin Airlift, and in its aftermath it became deeply involved in the refurbishment or construction of new airfields optimised for the second generation jet fighters, the new V-bombers, missile and radar sites, nuclear storage and command bunkers. Much of this work took place in Europe, but the ACB also had detachments spread widely across the world, its men often working in extreme weather conditions, from the wind-swept

Outer Hebrides to isolation in the Seychelles and Maldives and in the searing heat of South Arabia, the jungles of Thailand, Sarawak and North Borneo. Moreover, in Aden, Cyprus, Sarawak and North Borneo these men came under attack from terrorists, typically on the border between the Aden Protectorates and the Yemen at Beihan and in the Radfan mountains, but they were always ready, willing and able to defend themselves,

In some 110,000 words and 347 pictures, personal anecdotes of airmen at work and play are woven into a factual framework drawn from official archives, to pay tribute to the ACB.



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