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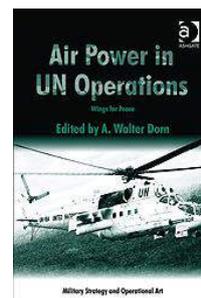
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Air Power in UN Operations: wings for peace

A. Walter Dorn (ed.)
Ashgate: Farnham UK, 2014, 388 pages
ISBN: 978-1-4724-3549-1
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Reviewed by Squadron Leader Travis Hallen, Royal Australian Air Force



Air power's employment in support of UN operations is little researched and poorly understood. This is a logical though unfortunate reflection of the primacy of land forces in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and humanitarian operations. However, as *Air Power in UN Operations* highlights, air power has a long history in support of the full spectrum of UN military missions.

From the Congo in 1960 through to Haiti in 2010, it is a history replete with lessons that hint at the potentialities to be exploited and challenges to be overcome if the UN and its member states are to reap the benefits air power offers. However, although *Air Power in UN Operations* provides a useful introduction to the subject matter it does not provide the 'conceptual base to examine joint [UN] air ground operations' called for by Lieutenant General Roméo A. Dallaire (Retd) in the book's foreword.

The main criticism of the book is that it lacks coherence. The division of the book into six parts is logical. Part I introduces the challenges of UN air power through examination of operations in the Congo between 1960 and 1964. Parts II to V address the four core air power roles: air mobility, ISR, control of the air (no-fly zones) and strike. The book concludes by looking to the future of UN air power. Although well structured, the book appears to suffer from an absence of clear direction to the various authors on the editor's principal intent, the result being that within each part the individual chapters are not well connected.

A chapter on 'Observing air power at work in Sector Sarajevo, 1993-1994', in the section covering no-fly zones, deals more with limitations of information sharing and the utility of airlift than the rationale for and challenges in enforcing no-fly zones. Additionally, two of the four chapters dealing with UN air power in a strike role focus primarily on NATO air power in Bosnia and Libya. This disjointedness makes it difficult for the reader to gain a clear appreciation of where UN air power is currently, and what its future will be. Indeed, it is tempting to assume that the book is intentionally symbolic of the disorganisation of UN air power.

Despite the mishmash of chapters, *Air Power in UN Operations* does have some strengths. Viewed individually, some of the chapters provide unique and interesting insights into UN air operations. The abovementioned chapter on air power in Sarajevo provides an excellent ground-up perspective of UN air power in support of complex operations. More relevant to the ADF, 'Humanitarian Relief in Haiti, 2010' examines how the US Air Force and the UN refined their relationship during the humanitarian response to the Haitian earthquakes. These lessons and the recommendations provided by the author to overcome them would be useful for anyone involved in the planning and execution of expeditionary humanitarian operations.

Finally, the book benefits from its uniqueness. As the first book to deal specifically with the subject, *Air Power in UN Operations* lays the foundation for what is an increasingly relevant area of research. Various chapters deal with a range of novel yet important aspects of UN air power, such as command of multinational forces; the control, coordination and integration of different national air and ground elements; the provision of leased aviation solutions; and the potential of remotely piloted aircraft systems as a key feature of future UN missions. These are subjects that present significant barriers to the effective and efficient employment of UN air power, as well as offering potential solutions to challenges faced by UN military officials.

It is unlikely that the UN's white aircraft will ever achieve the iconic status of the blue helmet. Even the most ardent air power advocate must acknowledge that the substitution of aircraft for boots on the ground is not a viable option for the vast majority of UN military operations. However, this book highlights that air power plays an important role in the effectiveness and efficiency of UN military missions, a role that air power theorists would be well served to investigate more closely. To this end, *Air Power in UN Operations* provides a useful compilation of potential avenues of research worthy of further investigation.

Air Power in UN Operations is recommended for those with an interest in air power history, air power in non-traditional operations or UN operations more generally.

