

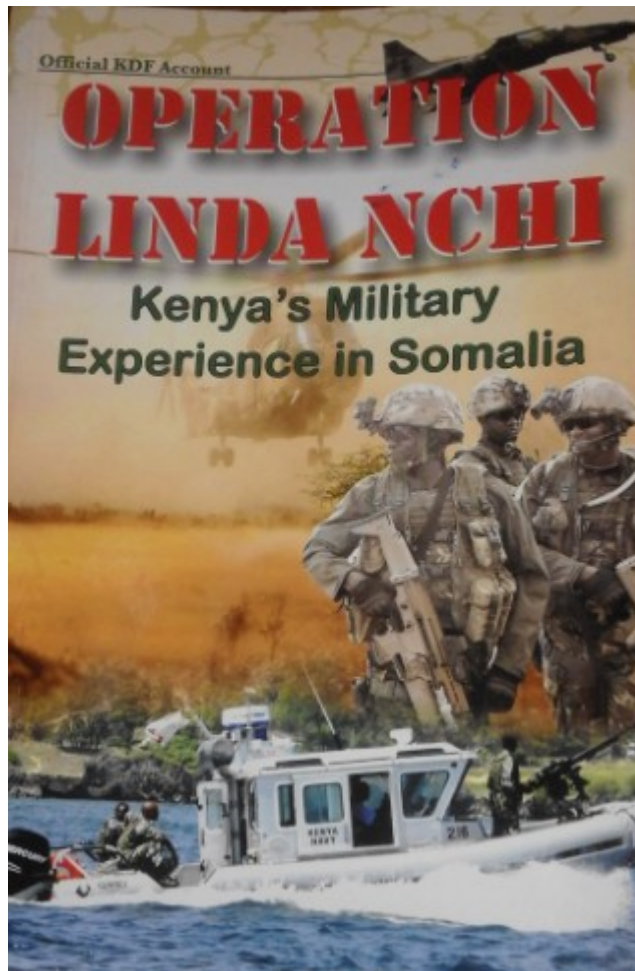
OPERATION LINDA NCHI - Kenya's Military Experience in Somalia

Paper-back : 305 pages

Ministry of Defence - Kenya Defence Forces 2014

Kenya Literature Bureau, Nairobi, Kenya

ISBN 978-9966-078-10-0



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The writers of this book extensively set out arguments to justify the war, and lay out the *casus belli* with terse clarity, probably avoiding to be viewed as glorifying the more morbid aspects of war fighting. Details of international law are painstakingly laid out and explained, this is of great assistance to the novice reader, but also a reminder to the forgetful expert.

It would be false to claim that Operation "Linda Nchi" was a unique ground breaking experience for the Kenyan military, the successor force to the Colonial military force. The roots of the Kenya Army today, are still deep in the Kings African Rifles of the Colonial era - "The Great War in East Africa", ie. World War One was the best documented and the most defining "modern" armed conflict that Kenyans engaged in.

Armoured cars, mortars, grenades, military aircraft and tactical radio systems were introduced to world via Kenya as a colony at the time of "The Great War". If only the Kenya Defence Forces bothered to research deeper into the past, it would trace many of its current traditions, equipment types and doctrine, back to World War One.

The declaration of the Kenya Defence Forces day as 14th - 10 - 2011 , cannot also over shadow the Rememberance day of 11th - 11 - 1918 observed through out the British Commonwealth. During "The Great War" over one million Kenyans lost their lives, hundreds of thousands of those deaths occurred in the battle field due to fighting and disease. In his book, "My Reminiscences of East Africa", General von Lettow-Vorbeck, published in 1921 by Hurst and Blackett, Ltd.,

Patternoster House E.C., therein it is stated that the population in Tanganyika suitable for military service in 1914 was 8 million this is stated in pages 11 and 19. This reviewer of "Operation Linda Nchi", feels compelled to bring to light these figures, as a Kenyan would question, the probable death of a million Kenyans during World War 1. Kenya has been known to have a higher population than Tanganyika.

Conspicuously rendered in the book is the depiction of Al Shabaab as a worthy enemy. That may be true to the extent that Al Shabaab was a determined conventional force at the onset of the conflict. But to the experienced observer, the delays in advancing through places such as Afmadhow during combat could be a pointer to the fact the the Kenyan Military did not bring sufficient force to bear on its adversary at the onset of the campaign.

The Afmadhow tactical miscalculation, proved to be time consuming during the course of the conflict. The arising implication is that something is deeply faulty about the Combat Estimate Model and Operations Order Process of the Kenya Defence Forces, a fundamental flaw with far reaching implications in this and other future armed conflicts.

The book does not cover all aspects of Operational Art as pertains to Operation "Linda Nchi" [swahili for safeguard or protect the Country], as some of the details are still classified and the overall operation against Al Shabaab is still a work in progress., ie. it covers the Operational Art aspects of macroscopic maneuver, operational approach and operational objectives.

But little information is revealed as pertains to Operational Logistics and the extent of disruption that is still required against Al Shabaab Operations in the Horn of Africa and beyond. Indeed the foreward by His Excellency Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H, the President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, appreciates the fact that the war against Al Shabaab is still ongoing - in other instances he has stated "...for as long as it takes...."

The book is described as the “idea” of the former Chief of Kenya Defence Forces (CDF), General (Dr.) Julius Karangi, who at the time of his active service felt that the campaign against Al Shabaab should be documented in form of a publicly available book. This was a unique idea for an African Military Force at the present time, but there are significant past conflicts documented in books especially around the colonial era, struggles for independence and post-independence episodes of guerilla warfare.

An example of past documentation and appreciation of history that is declining, is that in the 1950s to 1960s, students in Kenyan schools learnt about General Paul Emil von Lettow Voerbeck and "The Great War". This is despite the fact that Kenya was a British colony. Given the number of Kenya Defence Forces troops that have fallen to "water hole" ambushes near or inside Somalia, and the nature of the conflict in Somalia, Northern Nigeria [Boko Haram] and Central African Republic [Lords Resistance Army], it may be helpful if the Kenyan military was to dig deeper into history and reclaim the many lost lessons.

“Operation Linda Nchi” provides some insights on how present day operations are conducted in African nations with military training and regimentation, that are equivalent to that of the Republic of Kenya. Still low-tech and highly regimented, with the higher decision making echelons completely detached from the tempo of the battle-space due to low investment in C4ISTAR(Command, Control, Communications, Computing, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Reconnaissance) Infrastructure/Systems.

There are some basic military terminologies that did not come through in the text and ought to have been utilized assuming that the book was written and edited by subject matter specialists. A good example is that nothing explicitly terms Al Shabaab as a “Hybrid Threat” that manifests not only war-fighting capabilities but also exhibits some aspect of extensive non-terror type specific criminal conduct/capabilities. Mentioning this would immediately draw the attention of many experts in the realm of counter-insurgency

operations, asymmetric warfare and organized crime.

The book gives a good accounting of how the Kenya Defence Forces managed to convince Somalia people that the operation was against Al Shabaab and not against Islam as a religion practiced in Somalia. Al Shabaab had tried to a great extent to portray the Kenyan Military as anti-Islamic in its internet publications “Gaidi Mtaani” , “Operation Linda Uislamu”, and by way of religious sermons in mosques in Somalia.

A misconception in the book is that just war theory presupposes public support for military action in a State, that has a democratically elected government, as rendered in Page 74 paragraph 2. A democratically elected government/leadership must wield/execute power even when its actions are unpopular for the wider good of the Nation – this approach to reasoning and governance is ably described by John F. Kennedy in his book “Profiles in Courage”. War is by its very nature in most instances an unpopular and vote losing initiative for any politician.

Projection and execution of sovereign power of a State by way of military force cannot always be done with public support at times due to secrecy and/or military necessity. The least that can be expected is that the State in question has a legitimate/constitutional mandate to govern and does not violate the social, political and economic values held by its citizenry.

Due to the likely long-drawn nature of the conflict between Al Shabaab and the Kenya Government, eventually, the inability or unwillingness to wage an unpopular war on the part of Kenyans, may offer more than ample opportunities for the resurgence of Al Shabaab both as a governing entity and conventional military force. The Kenyan public may not be well prepared for the protracted country-side manhunts, long-haul stabilizing field deployments and targeting of high value individuals in the battle-space, that shall be required if the war is to come to an end.

Chapter 2, delves into the battle-space that was Somalia before Operation "Linda Nchi". It seeks to detail the nature of social, political and economic community that Somalia is. It also explores the history of the political and humanitarian challenge that was Somalia from the late 80s, to the time of the collapse of the Barre regime in the early 90s and subsequently attempts at re-establishing central Government under the process headed by Ali Mahdi.

Successful intervention in Somalia, was only possible if Kenya's Military fully grasped the local socio-political dynamics. Chapter 2 gives details of the law and order situation/mechanisms in Somalia, and the failures therein that led to the Kenyan intervention.

The founding of Al Shabaab and its modus operandi are explained in Chapter 3, there was the controversy as to whether Al Shabaab was too small and assymetric to be targeted or if it was a viable target for conventional and special military operations. Al Shabaab's expansionist policies and tendencies are also explained. Notably clan interplay comes into the picture, this lays out various fractures within the terrorist movement. Even at the time of writing this book review, there were splits in Al Shabaab between those who support ISIL (___terror movement) and the traditional Al Qaida members.

Chapter 4 expounds on the impact of Al Shabaab's operations in Kenya, as pertains to socio-political and security issues, such as attacks against local security and tourist facilities. This chapter also explains the role of the National Military Authority in Defence Administration within the Republic of Kenya, it is a body composed of the Chief of Defence Forces, the Kenya Air Force Commander, Kenya Army Commander and the Kenya Navy Commander.

The National Military Authority was the highest decision maker in the operation in terms of approving actual military tactics and strategy. It sought to achieve some of the following in the cause of the operation :

- initiate a semblance of Somalia public services in its areas of operation
- provide humanitarian relief services, e.g. food, water and medical

care

- disarmament of combatants
- destruction of the terror financing mechanisms and resource mobilization
- etc.

Chapter 5, elaborates on the many failed diplomatic efforts at establishing Central Government in Somalia, after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in the early 90s, and the socio-political costs of those failures. Consequently Kenya would attempt a Land Operation - "Linda Mpaka" and its maritime component Operation "Mamba", commencing around 2006, to deter incursions into Kenya by Al Shabaab.

An additional issue tackled in Chapter 5 is that of proliferation of small arms and light weapons after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime. This reviewer holds a different opinion : if small arms especially pistols and automatic weapons were readily available to Somalia's population prior to the conflict of 1988 - 1991, may be there would have been no need for external regimes to provide them for the overthrow of Siad Barre, and his regime might have governed with more care and avoided oppressing its people.

The book's authors go on to cite P. Eavis, "SALW(Small Arms and Light Weapons) in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region : Challenges and Ways Forward, Spring 2002 - Volume IX, Issue I, pp. 251 - 260, to the effect that, "...almost one out of every four Somalia males was armed with a weapon". To the casual observer this may seem pretty dangerous. It is dangerous only to the extent that the armed persons have no non-violent way of earning a living, in some instances high levels of gun ownership prevent government misconduct.

Despite being at civil war for long, the formation of balanced out militia groups and widespread possession of firearms, could have stabilized Somalia to the extent that it was and still is difficult to commit genocide in that type of environment. Somalis easily defended themselves from their adversaries, and the country could

only be governed by way of consensus. The lack of widespread ownership of firearms by the Tutsis and the general population in Rwanda, probably created a permissive environment for the few armed war criminals to go on a killing spree during the 1994 genocide.

It is not an outrageous idea for common citizenry to bear firearms or form militia, e.g. in the United States of America under the Second Amendment of the Constitution. Undoubtedly the Kenya Defence Forces utilized the services and support of anti-Al Shabaab militia, this would not have been possible if small arms and light weapons were only available to Al Shabaab. In such a socio-political environment of unarmed disempowered citizenry, Al Shabaab would be unchallenged.

Once combat operations were under way, Kenya utilized all means to ensure that the region and the international community at large, supported its war effort. Chapter 6, details the diplomatic and political efforts towards this objective. In the Clausewitz school of thought, war is an extension of politics through non-peaceful means. In so assuming Kenya's Government ensured that it possessed the requisite political/diplomatic support for its continued military campaign against Al Shabaab. A military resolution of the conflict had to be marketed as humanitarian, viable and necessary.

At the onset of military operations, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia was perceived to have reneged on its support. President Shariff Sheikh Ahmed preferred international facilitation and local war-fighting if not conflict resolution. But at this point in time Kenyan military forces had been committed to battle and it would have been most difficult, if not impossible to withdraw them and offer an alternative force with similar war fighting capabilities to take hold of the ground that it had seized from Al Shabaab.

In the field the Kenya Defence Forces had to play a balancing act with Somalia factions that were supporting it e.g. the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma and the Ras Kiamboni Brigade.

More details of the political and diplomatic efforts geared towards obtaining widespread support for the campaign are contained in Chapter 6. Kenyans views at the time of the campaign are sampled; the Kenyan military rightly perceived that public support shapes government policy and actions, and it sort to ensure that the Kenyan public was well informed. A year before the military campaign, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 was promulgated. This in effect ushered in the Second Republic of Kenya, and a consequence of the same was a new era of anticipated government openness to its citizens.

War is a finance intensive undertaking, hence the Kenyan military had to present sufficient information, to the extent that its campaign was vital in the face of competing national budgetary interests such as strikes in the clamour for salary increments by public servants. There was also the fear that negative publicity would easily sway public opinion. For the information from the military to be as reliable as possible, journalists were embedded with Kenyan combat forces, something that was unprecedented in modern Kenyan history.

But not far back in history, during “The Great War” [aka World War One] that was hotly contested in East Africa, the print media was “King of the Game”, and General Von Lettow Vorbeck, sought to get open source intelligence whenever he could from analyzing the contents of the print media as detailed in the Book, “GUERILLA - COLONEL VON LETTOW-VORBECK AND GERMANY'S EAST AFRICAN EMPIRE” by Edwin P. Hoyt . This type of open-source intelligence analysis was only possible to the extent that there was reliable reporting from the Battlefield.

Contrary to Chapter 7, Page 87 last paragraph, the first amphibious assault on the African continent in modern history was the British Amphibious landing at Aboukir Bay, Egypt in 1801, next was the abortive Battle of Tanga landing by the British in 1914 in Tanganyika. The assault by British East African Colonial Forces [many of the units being the direct forebearers of the Kenya Army] was against the German held port of Tanga on the Indian Ocean coast. Kenya was a country by then albeit a colony. The Tanga landing was unsuccessful

only because the British Forces after taking very heavy casualties failed to realize that the Germans had withdrawn due to a wrong bugle call which they interpreted to be an attack signal. The British then withdrew from the City and left it to be re-occupied by the Germans. Operation “Sledge Hammer” was not the first amphibious landing in Africa. We can dig deeper into ancient history for assaults by the Romans, Portugese, Omanis, etc.

Of all the concepts, the one that does not ring true about the Kenyan military is the concept of Joint Operations - Jointness at Work, as it is laid out in Chapter 8. Kenya Defence Forces do have a School for Joint Operations within the country, but at the opening phases of the war [till to date - at the time of writing this review] Al Shabaab maalums [specops] have crossed into Kenya on several occassions, in the counties of Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu. As a result of these incursions, there has been very heavy attacks by the Al Shabaab against the Kenya Police who are very lightly armed in many instances. But the Kenya Police seemed to be incapable of calling in air strikes from the Kenya Air Force, and in a number of cases their camps/bases were overrun by Al Shabaab.

Jointness was not exhibited by the Kenya Defence Forces during the first Al Shabaab incursions into Mandera County after 14th October 2011. During these encounters, ground forces would battle Al Shabaab infantry for hours, in engagements that would have been conviniently resolved by way of ground forces [Kenya Police Service, Administration Police Service and Kenya Army] calling in airstrikes by the Kenya Air Force.

Postulating that since Al Shabaab operations into Kenya at night have never been resisted by way of jet fighter air strikes, it may not be a misplaced opinion of the Al Shabaab that far striking high speed Kenya Air Force jet fighter air strikes, cannot be realized in the night or under poor visibility conditions. A very careful review of this book, “Operation Linda Nchi” in many instances demonstrates this perspective, to the extent that combat activities at night that continue into daylight, were only supported by airstrikes after sunrise.

From this chapter we also come upon more details of the Kenya Defence Forces hierarchy :

National Command Authority - Presidency (broad objectives including verbal orders)

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v

National Security Council (refined directives)

|

v

National Military Authority (strategic, operational and high-level tactical planning)

|

v

National Military Operations Centre (allocates resources and assigns tasks)

|

v

Joint Task Force Headquarters (personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, plans, communications, civil military co-operation, finance, legal)

The notorious “Ugali Strategy” of degrading the unknown enemy from the periphery towards their centre of gravity while gaining insight into their capabilities is nothing more than a “War of Attrition” in common terminology.

Chapter 9 explains the role of Allied forces, these were Ras Kiamboni Brigade, Ahlu Sunna wal Jamma, Azaaniya, Gedo Forces, Harti Group and the Somalia National Army. They had to be made conversant with Kenya Defence Forces standard operating procedures, as extensions of the Joint concept. Their local knowledge was crucial for Kenya Defence Forces operations. They would assist the Kenyan military in communicating with local populations, war fighting, and logistics.

Chapter 9, in the context of the time in which this review has been written raises more questions than the answers it gives. Currently Al Shabaab guerillas are operating in the Boni Forest, Lamu County,

Kenya, and the adjacent area in the Southern most tip of Somalia. But the Kenya Police and Kenya Defence Forces have failed to integrate the contributions of the local inhabitants into their counter-insurgency strategy. Villagers in these remote villages are at the moment exposed, unarmed and at the mercy of Al Shabaab, something that could have been avoided by way of Special Forces/Operations.

In Chapter 10 it is clear that Kenya military planners did not fully appreciate the preceding events leading to Operation Gothic Serpent [3 - 4 October, 1993] culminating in the “Black Hawk Down fiasco”. Notably Operation Michigan that led to the death of many innocent unarmed Somali civilians [Habre Gedir clan elders, women and children].

The significance of such understanding would serve as a warning to the Kenyan military and the wider African Union Mission in Somalia force, that there are some levels and forms of provocations that still remain unacceptable to Somalis of Somalia. This is detailed in the book, “The Zanzibar Chest – A STORY OF LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH IN FOREIGN LANDS” by Aidan Hartley, Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 2003, ISBN 0-87113-871-9. Hartley's book is thought-provoking and has some unprecedented insights into the social tensions in Yemen, a country now at civil war, that has some bearing on Somalia. Yemen is a source of arms and radical fighters into the region.

This lack of appreciation of the circumstances of the June 1993 situation in Mogadishu by the authors of the book, is displayed in Page 45 paragraph 1. It does not appear to be clear to the Kenya military authors, why General Aideed's Somali National Alliance attacked United Nations Operations in Somalia.

In Chapter 10 the Targeting Cell a single high-level entity in the OODA [observe, orient, decide and act] loop was charged with locating, identifying, classifying, vetting, validating, tracking, engaging targets then conducting battle damage assessments. In the text of the book the Joint Targeting Cell sought express permission from the National Military Authority before any target was engaged. This is the most

compelling indication that the function of targeting that is at the core of tactical military operations is not based on decentralized mission order effecting mechanisms.

“Auftragstaktik” is yet to be organically acceptable and implemented in the Kenya Defence Forces, a command aspect that would put it at a great disadvantage when confronting an adversary with capabilities similar or greater to those of its own in the course of a large-scale battle. There could also be the additional implication that the subordinates of the National Military Authority are not sufficiently well trained and equipped to be trusted with such decision making.

In retrospect we can now analyze the statement in Page 78 paragraph 1 whereby the National Military Authority repeatedly sought approval from Cabinet and Parliament for the scope of actions that were required to degrade Al Shabaab. Notably, an incident after publication of this book is indicative of this trend, ie. The Garissa University Terror Attack of 2015. The crisis at Garissa was escalated from Police Command to National Security Advisory Committee, to the National Security Council, while several terrorists murdered students from around 5:30 am to 7:30pm.

Despite the fact that the carnage was under way, the security and military forces at the scene simply secured the perimeter and did not intervene. The only available transport was used to ferry strategic-level leadership to the site, and not the tactical units who had the capability to stop the carnage. This incident is the best indication to date after the Mpeketoni attacks in Lamu of 2014, that Auftragstaktik has no place in the minds of strategic level leadership in the military and security mechanism in Kenya.

An additional observation is essential, it is noted that “Auftragstaktik” that was mistakenly stated as “Auftragstaktii” is mentioned in the text on page 111 paragraph 2 without elaboration or explanation as to its essential implementation in the Kenyan military. Furthermore it is not documented in the book's index, another keyword excluded is “Sadan” i.e. Sedan, this exclusion signifies that the Authors of the Book some

of whom are very experienced academics, did not view them as worth commenting upon or vital to the overall structure and flow of the book, but they were only convenient “spicy” insertions to the text.

Battle Damage Assessment method laid out also seems to be cumbersome, especially in the course of airstrikes. For instance in a jet fighter equipped with the required optronic devices, Battle Damage Assessment information may be obtained from the attack platform itself. Humint on the ground could also supplement, but there is no use of committing tasked Humint or a tasked asset e.g. Unmanned Air Vehicle to obtain the same information, given that in war resources are finite and scarce.

In Chapter 11, page 151 on the Mount Elgon Campaign against the Sabao Land Defence Force, there are well documented allegations in many other sources[e.g. Independent Medico-Legal Unit report] against the Kenyan military, so does the Wagalla Massacre referred to as the “Wagalla Incident” of 1984. The investigative files are open in both cases and the Kenyan military should have avoided mentioning/commenting on the issues, if on its own motion it is unwilling to give all available information to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. For an occurrence of 1984 some of the Senior military staff currently in office, were in service at the time, may have been in the area. It is in bad taste for the book's authors to have commented on this specific issue.

Contrary to the perceptions laid out in Chapter 11, Low-intensity and covert warfare, well waged need not require explicit public backing in a democracy, as the public and most arms of government are unaware of such undertakings, which in many instances are vital especially against existential threats.

Chapter 12 provides more evidence of the lack or unacceptability of Auftragstaktik in the Kenyan military, well known for its old ways of doing things, in many instances. In page 178 Officer-in-Charge raising/calling 1 Battle Group Commanding Officer Lt. Col. G.M. Nyaga using a Thuraya sat-phone to request for close air support. The

chaining of the request via the army hierarchy is then described, this brings up many issues, e.g. :

1. There is no Auftragstaktik here
2. Air power cannot operate in the darkness - i.e. the jet fighters that were available
3. The OODA (observe, orient, decide and act) loop is too long and slow for a modern fighting force
4. Ground war-fighting units in many instances do not have direct communication with jets conducting air support operations
5. The Kenya Air Force was not conducting regular combat air patrols probably due to cost restrictions and had to be called on from their operating bases (deeper reading of the conflict in the Kenyan Dailies [and widely available online]of the time describe the Al Shabaab as receiving airlifts from some unknown source, this would not have been possible if the Kenya Air Force had sufficient resources for combat air patrol on a full-time basis).

In Chapter 12, in Page 176 paragraph 3 there is an estimate as to the personnel numbers involved in a combat team. A combat team is described as comprising of approximately 4 officers and 184 soldiers. Page 177, provides some details on an Al Shabaab troop concentration spotted moving towards Hoosingo, before the battle. This concentration could have been easily identified by ground and air assets both day and night and neutralized by Air Power, but it was inexplicably allowed to approach and attack the Kenya Army encampment. Failure to strike Al Shabaab from the air was yet another instance demonstrating the lack of Auftragstaktik thought lines in the mainstreams of the Kenyan military.

In war there is nothing such as allowing for a fair fight in combat, every commander seeks to have his troops neutralize the adversary from a position of strength aka "an unfair advantage".

In Page 187, on the Battle of Fafadun, is a recurring scenario when aerial surveillance assets again spotted an Al Shabaab attack convoy of 20 lorries and one technical vehicle moving towards Fafadun, but they were not neutralized when possible via air strikes. The resultant

combat contact led to 2 deaths and 3 injuries amongst Kenya Defence Forces soldiers.

Paragraph 188 paragraph 4, demonstrates that despite Kenyan military assertions, to the contrary the Air Force seemed to lack the assets to conduct infantry close air support at night.

Another instance that is indicative of lack of substantive mission orders (i.e. absence of Auftragstaktik in Command practice) is in Page 194 paragraph 3. Despite the failure to tow an armoured personnel carrier and a 10-ton lorry that were damaged on 1st - 9 - 2012 and the prospect of Al Shabaab (who had looted the contents therein) towing them away, attack helicopters came in to destroy them on the next day 2nd - 9 - 2012. It is overwhelmingly probable that despite the urgency of the destruction, high level decision making was required.

On Page 195 paragraph 4 detailing a contact on 4th - 9 - 2012 when a 60mm mortar was used to attack Kenyan military positions in Middo, the fact that it took three days of waiting to spot the mortar battery by aerial surveillance on 7th - 9 - 2012 may be implicit evidence that by this instance in time and probably to date, the Kenyan military did not field or were not in possession of tactical radars for protecting fielded units from rockets and other shells.

In terms of automation issues the 81mm mortar bombs that destroyed Al Shabaab headquarters near the Hoosingo battle-space were fired probably upon manual calibration of the targeting system. They were not the homing kind and there is also no evidence of use of ballistic computers in targeting efforts.

The Battle of Afmadhow was the most disturbing phase of the operation into Somalia. The inability of the Kenyan military to overrun the Al Shabaab positions for months upon months was disturbing to the Kenyan public. The seemingly tit-for-tat warfare did nothing to inspire the confidence of the Kenyan public as to the capabilities of their military.

Probably the Kenya Defence Forces under-estimated the quantity and types of mechanized armour it would take to plough the Al Shabaab positions in short order. The fighting was not of the reflexive type and it was clear to the world that the Kenyan forces had encountered some manner of difficulties and were bogged down.

Again in this theatre Auftragstaktik was in no way exhibited. The time it took to get the job done was telling. The National Military Authority was the key player thousands of kilometres from the battle-space, it was a direct orders mode of work and there was nothing to do with ground commanders adhering to mission orders. Chapter 12 in page 199 paragraph 4 describes an interesting Al Shabaab tactic to date, “the water-hole ambush”.

Chapter 13 gives us some insights into Kenya Defence Forces organization in combat in Somalia

Sector (Current regions identified by African Union forces, controlled by different military units e.g. Kenya, Uganda)

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v

Battle Groups (1, 2, 3, 4, 5,)

|

v

Combat Teams (A, B, C, D, E,)

|

v

Company (Coy)

|

v

Platoon

|

v

Squads (the logical building blocks of platoons)

This chapter like most others demonstrates that Kenyan military advances were mainly daylight affairs, such as that towards Gubukibir.

There is no significant night vision combat technology advantage for the Kenyan military against the Al Shabaab, although the former is in possession of various night vision devices.

The mis-spelling of “Sedan” as “Sadan” in page 204 paragraph 2 makes it look more as if this was more of an insertion and after thought than a genuine inspiration. Unlike the Battle of Sedan when Emperor Napoleon III was captured in 1870, by the time of release of this review, the Kenyan military had not captured or neutralized any sitting Head Amir of Al Shabaab, the authors must have been pursuing fantasies and not fact at this point of the book.

The event of the surrender of Emperor Napoleon III was indeed a bloodless incident, but there were several thousand deaths on the Prussian side and tens of thousands of deaths on the French side all within a space of a day before the actual surrender. Victory was not immediate and the fighting continued after the surrender.

As this reviewer of the book is Kenyan, is of the opinion that the contents of Chapter 14 on compliance with the norms of human rights by the Kenyan military can only be verified, if the National Military Authority and military staff appointed by the President of the Republic of Kenya, submit themselves to Article 132(2) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, something that has not occurred since August 2010.

This obvious violation of the Constitution raises deep questions into the operations attitude and level of “professionalism” exhibited by the Kenyan military and its purported submission to Civilian Authority as required by the same Constitution. Kenya Defence Forces must be held to a higher standard, it is the ultimate enforcer of the law, has highly educated staff and to those who more is given, more is expected from them.

Chapter 15 details “hearts and minds” campaigns waged by the Kenyan military, e.g. the work of its Water Drilling Squadron.

In Chapter 16 there is the transition into the African Union force, the

main advantage was that all the equipment and logistics of the African Union efforts in Somalia are funded by the United Nations, the European Union and the United States of America. Funding includes :

- service allowances for troops
- fuel and logistics
- advanced military training and technologies

Premature withdrawal of the Kenyan military from Somalia could lead to almost overnight evaporation of the gains made to date, as Al Shabaab has no bounds in its brutality and has an international support base willing to fund and provide for it even via airlifts, at each and every possible opportunity.

The reviewer of this book, given his wider reading of the conflict, appreciates that on many occasions as reported in other text, fielded Kenya military officers on the ground took extra-ordinary risks on their own initiative. This may be proof of a growing appreciation that mission orders and mission comprehension are vital when fast tempo fighting leaves no opportunities for consulting the higher hierarchies of the military.

In totality the book is good reading for the cadet, service/tradesmen cadres, etc. But for high command levels, the book would serve as good reading only if one is willing to read between the lines and undertake a comparative analysis with related texts.

ERRATA

Page 57 foot note 117 line 4 : "...Conduted..." should be "...conducted..."

Page 62 paragraph 2 line 4 : had had

Page 75 paragraph 4 line 3 : "constitution....." should be "Constitution....."

Page 79 Footnote 170 : “Hanzard” should be “Hansard”

Page 111 paragraph 2 line 2 : “Auftragstaktii” should be “Auftragstaktik”

Page 134 paragraph 2 line 7 : “Aminyat” should be “Amniyat”

Page 141 paragraph 4 : “Radio Andulus” should be “Radio Andalus”

Page 141 paragraph 4 : “Al Kataib Media Foundation” should be “Al Kataib Foundation for Media”

Page 178 paragraph 5 line 3 : “fares” should be “flares”

Page 190 paragraph 1 : “snipping parties” should be “sniping parties”

Page 199 paragraph 2 line 7 : “YY helicopters” means “Hughes MD 500 Defender Helicopters”

Page 204 paragraph 2 line 3 : “Sadan” should be “Sedan”

The analysis of the photographic aspects of the book have not been committed to writing, e.g. image analysis of the photos, this is because the full array of unedited photos and related contextual information are not available to this reviewer.

Book review by Nyagudi Musandu Nyagudi - Security Analyst and Independent Researcher, Nairobi, KENYA

Date of review : 29th - 7 - 2015