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To cite this article: Julian Bennett & John M. Ballard (2022) British Pattern 1907 Bayonets Marked to the Royal Air Force: An Archaeo-Historical Investigation, *Arms & Armour*, 19:2, 198-219, DOI: [10.1080/17416124.2022.2134288](https://doi.org/10.1080/17416124.2022.2134288)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17416124.2022.2134288>



Published online: 14 Nov 2022.



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# British Pattern 1907 Bayonets Marked to the Royal Air Force: An Archaeo-Historical Investigation

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A known total of 83 World War One period Pattern 1907 bayonets for the ‘Rifle, Short, Magazine, Lee-Enfield, Mark III’ have pommel markings indicating issue to the Royal Air Force, formed on 1st April 1918. They bear alpha-numeric serial markings best interpreted as stock-taking marks, suggesting a maximum total of 70,000 were allocated for use by that air force. The written sources indicate that from at least 1922 to 1937, bayonets and the rifles to go with them were a regular part of an aircraftman’s equipment. Neither these nor a search of unpublished documents in the National Archives and the British Library provide a possible explanation why these weapons would be issued to the Royal Air Force, suggesting an archaeo-historical approach was more appropriate. This article sets out our results and conclusions on the subject.

KEYWORDS Pattern 1907 bayonets, Royal Air Force, T.E. Lawrence

## Introduction

A casual survey by one of us in 2014 of unit pommel markings on Pattern 1907 (P.07) bayonets identified 15 marked to the Royal Air Force (RAF). In each case, the marking followed the same format: the initials ‘R.A.F.’ on the upper line,



FIGURE 1. Typical pommel markings on an RAF-issued P.07 bayonet with, for comparison, an army P.07 marked for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Bedfordshire Regiment (source: the authors).

above an underlined, sequential numeric indicator ranging from ‘1’ through ‘1.A’, to ‘1.F’ on a second line, above a serial number on a third line, with the highest known serial number in 2014 being 1.D. 9298 (e.g., [Figure 1](#)). Where the markings on their ricassos were legible all had ‘accepted for service’ dates indicating manufacture before production of the type ceased in 1919, the bayonet itself having been made for the ‘Rifle, Short, Magazine, Lee Enfield Mark III’ (Mk. III rifle), the standard issue long firearm of the British Army at the start of, and throughout, World War One, and later. As the RAF did not come into existence until 1st April 1918, and as the Royal Air Force Regiment, founded in 1942, used an entirely different type of rifle and bayonet, the later ‘Rifle, No.4. Mk. I’,<sup>1</sup> this naturally raised the question of when and why these World War One period weapons had entered RAF service.

What was originally a simple matter of curiosity deepened with the awareness of this system of alpha-numeric serial numbering might represent a central stock-taking measure in which once a first run of a given items up to a set number had been reached, for example, 1-9999, the next series would begin with an alphabetical prefix, A for the next 1-9999, B for the next, and so on. In which case, simple calculation suggested that if the sequence extended to ‘1.F 9999’, then the potential number of P.07 bayonets issued to the RAF and marked accordingly implied that at some stage, in its existence, this arm of service was provided with possibly as many as 70,000, presumably with the requisite number of Mk. III rifles also. As if that observation was not in itself enough to encourage further research, there was the fact that most of the initially identified RAF-marked bayonets had their ricassos scrubbed to the extent that manufacturer’s names and dates of issue, and even other official markings were barely legible if not completely removed, and often had new grips attached ([Figures 2](#) and [3](#)). Evidently, they had been re-furbished and polished aggressively at some stage in their existence. Thus, we attempted to bring to light the history of these RAF-marked P.07 bayonets, which we report here. But first, for those unfamiliar with this bayonet and the rifle it was designed for, a brief introduction to both would probably be useful.



FIGURE 2. The 'well-scrubbed' right ricasso markings on two RAF P.07 bayonets compared to those found on an army-issue bayonet (source: the authors).



FIGURE 3. The 'well-scrubbed' left ricasso markings on two RAF P.07 bayonets compared to those found on an army-issue bayonet (source: the authors).

### The 'Rifle, Short, Magazine, Lee Enfield Mark III' and the pattern 1907 bayonet

The Mk. III rifle was introduced into British Army service in 1903, partly from the desire by infantry officers for a lighter rifle less of an encumbrance when on campaign, and partly, in response to experiences on the North West Frontier as a means of encouraging excellence in marksmanship by the individual soldier.<sup>2</sup> Its design combined in a shortened rifle elements of the Lee Enfield Mk. I and I\*, and Lee-Enfield Mk. II and II\*, with a 10-round magazine for .303 calibre bullets, loaded via five-round charger clips, the shorter barrel, giving an overall length of 44.57 in (1.132 m), compared to that of the Lee Enfield Mk. I at 49.6 inches (1.260 m). As originally issued, the Mk. III rifle was supplied with a short knife-style bayonet, the Pattern 1903, with a double-edged blade 12 inches (300 mm) long, identical to the earlier Pattern 1888 bayonet designed for the 'Rifle, Magazine, Mk. I' introduced the same year, but with a re-designed pommel for the studded nose-cap fitting system employed with the Mk. III rifle.<sup>3</sup> The result was an official butt-plate to tip of bayonet or 'reach' of the Mk. III rifle with a fixed bayonet of 4 ft 8.75 inches (1.441 m), somewhat shorter than that of the contemporary French 1886 Lebel rifle and its bayonet, 5 ft 11 inches (1.803 m), and the German Mauser 1898 rifle and bayonet at 5 ft 9.75 inches (1.771 m).<sup>4</sup> At a time when bayonet fencing still featured in many military training manuals,<sup>5</sup> many military commentators considered this 'reach' inadequate,<sup>6</sup> leading to the development of the longer P.07 sword bayonet, with a blade length of 17 inches (430 mm), giving an official butt-plate to bayonet tip of 5 ft 1.9 inches (1.746 m) (Figure 4).<sup>7</sup> Until late 1913, all P.07 bayonets



FIGURE 4. Under pommel marking 'RAF/1/0681' (source: courtesy of R.G.J.Deer).

were made with a lower 'hooked' quillon, often subsequently removed from bayonets in service use, while in January 1916, all P.07 bayonets began to be made with a clearance hole in their pommel, armourers adding these to older bayonets when the occasion allowed.<sup>8</sup>

The Mk. III rifle and P.07 bayonet were standard issue to units of British Army at the start of, and throughout, World War One. Although production had begun shortly after the start of the war on a planned replacement rifle, the 'Rifle, Magazine, .303, Pattern 1914', in the event, this did not enter army service on a widespread basis, most of those produced before hostilities ceased in 1918 going into war-reserve stocks.<sup>9</sup> From May 1926, a change in army nomenclature resulted in the Mk. III rifle being re-designated as the 'Rifle No. 1', and the P.07 bayonet the 'Bayonet no.1'. They continued to be the standard British army issue with some slight variations while work continued from 1930 on the development of its planned replacement, the 'No. 4 Rifle, Mark I,' and its Bayonet No. 4, the 'spike' bayonet, officially introduced into service on 15th November. Production of this No. 4 rifle had been much delayed owing to financial problems, and at the time, only about 3,500 had been manufactured.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Mk. III rifle and P.07 bayonet remained the standard long firearm in British military service for much of World War Two, even though production of the rifle ended after 1918 except for a commercial version made at Small Heath, Birmingham.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it continued in service with the British army until 1955 or so when the FAL or 7.62x51 mm L1A1 SLR was introduced.<sup>12</sup>

All P.07 bayonets were marked on their left ricasso with the month and year they were officially approved for military issue, along with a makers' mark. Nine makers were involved in their production in the period leading up to 1919:<sup>13</sup> six were English: J. A. Chapman Ltd., Royal Small Arms Factory Enfield, R. Mole & Sons,

Sanderson Bros & Newbould Ltd., Vickers Ltd. and Wilkinson Sword Co. Ltd., all of whom had ceased making the bayonet by the end of 1919, after producing an estimated 4,830,000 examples.<sup>14</sup> Three manufacturers were based outside of England, the Lithgow Small Arms Factory (Australia); the Remington Arms Company (USA); and the Rifle Factory, Ishapore (India), but their war-time production cannot be calculated as they continued to make these bayonets after 1919. Those P.07's issued to British Army field units prior to the outbreak of World War One were stamped with a unique identifier on the right-hand flat surface of the pommel denoting the unit they were issued to (see [Figure 1](#)). The basic style of these pommel markings was that found on a brass disc affixed to the right-hand side of the buttstock of all service-issue rifles, as specified originally in Appendix I of the *Instructions for Armourers* issued under Army Order Gen. No. 5667 in 1897, with revised versions being published in 1912 and 1916. For most infantry regiments, the marking consisted of a numeral denoting the battalion of a regiment followed by two to four letters on the same line that were the approved abbreviation for the name of the regiment, although a slightly different style was used for specialized formations such as Royal Engineer sub-units, etc.

Beneath this unit identifier was a number, commonly referred to as a 'rifle' or 'rack' number. It is believed that this number was to ensure a specific bayonet was always paired with a specific rifle by linking it to an identical marking on the brass disc affixed to that rifle's buttstock. Such pairing would have been essential in earlier times, when differences in manufacturing tolerances could allow a bayonet to be slightly loose or overtight on one particular rifle while fitting another correctly; but there is nothing to substantiate unequivocally the belief that such serial-numbering pairing of rifle and bayonet was followed in the period immediately before World War One. For example, all that the 1897 edition of the *Instructions to Armourers* has to say on the matter is that bayonets are marked with consecutive numbers on that side of the bayonet-pommel facing away from the body,<sup>15</sup> while the 1912 version, as amended in 1916, makes no comment at all on the serial numbering of bayonets. On the other hand, some significant support for the claim might be found in the 1931 edition which notes that 'If the bayonet is very slack on the nose-cap, exchange the bayonet for a closer fitting one on another rifle on which the slack bayonet is a better fit, and then re-number the bayonets to the rifles.'<sup>16</sup>

The apparent rarity of these unit codes and serial numbers on the pommels of P.07 bayonets dateable from their ricasso markings to post-August 1914 has led to the conjecture that unit-marking of infantry weaponry was suspended by the British Army during World War One. This would be in accordance with the practice of other armies that unit-marked their weaponry in peacetime but ended the system (at least officially) in wartime, such as the Imperial German Army, allegedly to prevent the identification of opposing enemy units from their captured rifles and bayonets. Nonetheless, the inclusion of unit markings in the 1912 edition of the *Instructions to Armourers* as amended in 1916, indicates that the practice was still 'on the books',

as it were, if not commonly followed post-1914. It may have been the case, although research is needed on this point, that after 1914 such markings were limited to bayonets held by reserve units. Be that as it may, what is clear is that the practice of unit-marking on rifle butt discs at least was resumed in the inter-war period and is spelt out and illustrated on pages 548–566 in *Regulations for the Equipment of the Army: Part I 1942*.

### Bayonets marked for the RAF

Our attempt at understanding the origin and history of these RAF-marked bayonets began by retrieving all available physical data regarding the known examples. This was collected initially from examples of P.07 RAF-marked bayonets held by both authors and as the result of posting an appeal on a website used by British World War One bayonet collectors. The preliminary dataset was supplemented by a scouring of web-pages devoted to edged weaponry as well as on-line auction and similar sites, a process that continues today, although only four examples were recorded in the six or so months preceding the initial work on this article in December 2020. The data that was requested, with photographs where possible, included the complete pommel marking; the name of the maker; the inspection month and year; evidence for ‘scrubbing’ of the ricasso; any ‘re-inspection marks’ and the year(s)—on which see further below; and any other markings or notable features. Not all the required information was available for those examples for sale on-line, which largely accounts for those cases in which the required parameters are unknown.

### Results

A total of 83 bayonets marked to the RAF in this style have been recorded using this alpha-numeric system, some including a scant few with the marking on the underside of the pommel heel (e.g., [Figure 5](#)), some with scabbards marked on their lockets simply ‘RAF’ and no serial number. These have provided us with 84 serial sequences; the discrepancy arises from how one bayonet had its original serial (‘1.A 0371’) lined through and a different one (‘1. 6719’) applied later. As given in [Table 1](#), the



FIGURE 5. ‘1 SD 4 21’ mark with modified SOS mark (source: courtesy of <https://www.great-warforum.org/topic/218466-royal-air-force-marked-bayonets/page/5/>).

TABLE 1.  
Numbers of RAF-marked bayonet by alpha-numeric serial markings (\*indicates two numbers on same bayonet).

1.	1.A	1.B	1.C	1.D	1.E	1.F	A.L.	1.UNK*
0681	0371**	0140	1175	0871	0116	1113	5415	6701
749***	0943	1601	2202	2017	0398	2103		
0768	1078	2994	3641	3021	0852	6802		
1712	1606	3157	5222	3605	0897			
1878	4027	4607	5398	3713	1016			
2279	4335	4650	6557	4379	1550			
5552	7859	5652	7808	5319	1559			
5806	8065	7112	8080	5546	1787			
5809		7173	9235	5713	2440			
6719**		7448	9303	5868	3242			
6731		8238	9798	6563	3881			
7912		8757	9911	7390	3991			
8356		9557		7564	4033			
9369				7600	4232			
9957				8490	4594			
9996				9298	4791			
				9500	4840			
					5448			
					5476			
					6206			
					6341			

\*Denotes series unknown due to corrosion; \*\*denotes 1.A 0371 lined through and replaced by 1. 6719; \*\*\*denotes NOT marked 0749.



FIGURE 6. '1 SD/11 RAF 20' mark on a P.07 scabbardloket (source: the authors)

bayonets belonged to one of eight different series, i.e., 'I', 'I.A' to 'I.F', with one example allegedly prefixed 'A.L.' We say 'allegedly' as we were not able to obtain photographic confirmation of that reading, described on a Canadian website in 2016. It remains unique in our data set with its well-represented sequence of 'I' to I.F'. Thus, we suspect it may have been incorrectly read and it will not feature in our discussion. The highest serial numbers we have observed to date in any sequence are in the 9900s, and the lowest are in the 100–200 range. The alphanumeric sequence we have recorded, from 'I' to 'I.F', and with a possible high number of 9999 for each of these sequences, suggests a total issue figure for these RAF-marked bayonets of about 70,000.

Three examples also have a marking on the left-hand side of the pommel reading 'I/S D/3 2I', 'I/SD/4 2I' (Figure 6), and 'I/SD/5 2I, respectively, while a P.07 scabbard has a locket marked 'I/S D/11 RAF 20' (Figure 7), the angle of and inverted





FIGURE 7. The 'N' ricasso mark on a bayonet pommel marked 'RAF/1.B/1601' indicating it was originally issued to the Royal Navy (source: courtesy of R.G.J.Deer).

nature of the abbreviation 'RAF' clearly preceding the '11' and the '20' stamping.<sup>17</sup> 'SD' was the standard interwar period RAF abbreviation for a Stores Depot, which is consistent with a notion examined below these bayonets were at some point held in a RAF Stores Depot, in this case, RAF Number 1 Stores Depot., established *circa* 1919 with the creation of the RAF Stores Branch.<sup>18</sup> The markings suggest those bayonets so-marked were registered when placed into storage there, in November 1920 for the scabbard, and March, April and May, 1921 for the bayonets, which would fit with the known history of SD No. 1: after 1924, SD No. 2 (Altrincham) became the storage centre for the stocks of arms, ammunition, and bombs held by the RAF.<sup>19</sup>

What is more, the reverse side of each of the three pommels has in addition a lined-through 'sold-out-of-service' mark'. Such 'SOS' markings are found on British weaponry that has been, as the term indicates, officially 'sold' from the British Army for use by another country, although in practice, it can mean that a weapon has passed from the stocks of the British Army to another armed force. For example, SOS marks are a consistent feature of P.07 bayonets supplied by Britain to Australia in 1909 or so. In this case we assume an analogous process, these bayonets being marked SOS on their passing from the British Army to the RAF. Be that as it may, all three of these bayonets have the standard RAF markings on the right-hand side of their pommels, reading '1.E 0116', '1.A 0371' and '1.C 9798', that on the second having its original marking cancelled by being lined through and '1. 6719' added beneath. It is the only example we are aware of that has been re-serialised this way and we assume that as with similar markings of bayonets issued to the infantry regiments of the British Army, the original serial number was cancelled and replaced with a new one on re-issue, as indeed is set out in the *Instructions for Armourers* of 1931. In such cases, though, as far as we have been able to establish, the original unit designation remained the same, i.e., it stayed within its unit, but this particular RAF bayonet is somewhat different in having been re-serialised from one alpha-numeric series to another.

Of the 82 bayonets for which we have details, 36 (44%) were made by Wilkinson, 13 (16%) by Sanderson, 9 (11%) by Chapman, 6 (7%) by Enfield, 4 (5%) by Vickers and 1 (1%) by RFI; a further 13 (16%) had their ricasso 'scrubbed' to the extent that their maker was unknown. As Wilkinson and Sanderson made the greatest numbers of P.07 bayonets, it is hardly surprising they have the greatest representation in this data set. A single example only was recorded as made by the Rifle Factory, Ishapore, and one by Mole, but none at all by Remington, or Lithgow. It is thought that RFI-made bayonets were deployed almost exclusively by units of the Indian Army, which served on the Western Front and elsewhere, and so returned with these forces to India at the war's end, although evidently the one we have recorded did not do so. Similarly, with the Lithgow P.07 bayonets, made for Australian forces and which presumably returned home with the Australian Imperial Force in 1918. As for Remington, they supplied P.07 bayonets in relatively limited numbers early in the war, which might explain their absence from the dataset, partly on account of their overall rarity, and partly because many of them could have been lost in early combat and not survived into the post 1918 period.

As noted above, all P.07 bayonets have a two-part inspection mark on their ricasso in the form of a numbered month and year. In our dataset, examples made in or before 1916 account for only 16 (30%), while bayonets made in 1917 or later make up the remaining 70%. It probably reflects how the production of war materiel of all types increased many-fold in the later years of the war. That said, we know of two RAF marked P.07 bayonets an upper case 'N' stamped on the right ricasso, one of these shown in [Figure 8](#) on a bayonet made at Enfield in February 1909, the oldest dated RAF-marked example we know of, pommel marked 'RAF/I.B/1601'. This 'N' mark was used to denote bayonets issued to the Royal Navy, supplied pre-1914 with the Mk. III rifle and P.07 bayonets for use by boarding parties etc. The rapid expansion of the British Army after 1914 and the resultant shortage of Mk. III rifles meant that the 9,000 or so Mk. III's then in the Navy's possession were officially surrendered for Army field use on 25th November 1914.<sup>20</sup> It appears that these bayonets were issued originally to the Royal Navy, then withdrawn for use by the British Army in 1914, making them available in-store and so on-hand for issue subsequently to the RAF.

Which brings us, albeit briefly, to the matter of what measures Britain adopted regarding the large numbers of rifles and bayonets as well as other weaponry brought back by formerly active service units after the armistice of 11th November 1918. As far as it is understood, when the British Army began demobilization in 1918–1919, rifles and bayonets (along with other sundry official equipment) were handed in by the individual soldiers to centralized depots. The Islington Committee of 1917 had already concluded that Britain should be committed to a doctrine of not exporting surplus stocks of small arms and ammunition except under State control, a policy incorporated into law in 1920.<sup>21</sup> In 1924, the disposal of British Army surplus stocks



FIGURE 8. P.07 pommel marked RAF/1.E./5652 with tangmarked 'LEU 259' (source: D.J. Elvery-Knight, 'Knightsgold eBay', Australia).

directly or by dealers was halted, but soon reversed, and then in 1929 the ban was re-instated, only for sales to be resumed in 1930.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile this weaponry had to be stored until disposed. Insofar as individual units were concerned, those bayonets still in service use were, according to the various *Instructions to Armourers*, inspected, re-browned, and refurbished or repaired when necessary on a regular basis. This procedure is thought to explain the so-called re-inspection marks, in which some P.07 bayonets have one or more double digit marks stamped on the ricasso with an inspector's mark of a crown over a letter and number combination as is seen on the ricassos of bayonets when originally inspected for service use. As these double digits are always numerically higher than the year of their initial inspection markings, as, for example, a bayonet made in '17 with a '23 associated with a regular crowned inspector's mark, it is thought these digits represent a year mark indicating when a particular bayonet was refurbished and approved for re-issue, in this case a 1917 example inspected and re-approved for service use in 1923. As given in Table 2, about 78% of the RAF-marked bayonets carry such re-inspection marks with dates ranging from 1919 to 1922. It could indicate these were re-inspected before being passed over to the RAF in that time period. However, not too much emphasis should, perhaps, be placed on that possibility. One bayonet

TABLE 2.  
Year of first 're-inspection' by number.

Chapman	Enfield	Sanderson	Vickers	Wilkinson
1 '12	2 '09	6 '15	5 '18	4 '15
12 '15	10 '09	10 '15 (3)	7 '18	8 '15
10 '16	3 '11	1 '17	8/9 '18	8 '16
5 '17 (2)	4 '12	4 '17	11 '18	10 '16
2 '18 (2)	1 '15	7 '17	unknown	11 '16
3 '18	unknown (2)	1 '17		xx '16
5 '18		5 '18		1 '17
		10 '18 (2)		2 '17
		12 '18		8 '17
		2 '19		10 '17 (2)
		unknown (2)		11 '17 (1)
Mole	Rifle Factory I.			xx '17
11 '17	1 '17			1 '18 (3)
				2 '18 (2)
				3 '18
				4 '18 (2)
				5 '18
				6 '18
				10 '18
				11 '18 (4)
				12 '18
				xx '18
				1 '19 (2)
				2 '19
				unknown (7)

Notes: xx denotes numerals are not legible; numbers in parentheses indicate number of examples of that date; 8/9 can be read as either numeral.

originally inspected 3 '11 was re-inspected in 1917, the year before the RAF was formed; one made in 1 '18 was re-inspected in 1918; and two made in 3 '18 and 8 '15, respectively, were re-inspected in 1941. As we will see below, this 1941 date follows on from when the RAF was ordered to surrender most of its Mk. III rifles and bayonets for Army use.

Whether 're-inspection' marks are present or not, it is clear that many of the RAF-marked P.07 bayonets were re-furbished, as is seen in how many have had their original walnut grips replaced with some other kind of hard wood. More obvious to the eye, though, is the way that apart from those with under-the-pommel markings, all of the 'RAF/1/XXXX' marked variety, many of these RAF P.07 bayonets are excessively shiny due to polishing and burnishing, probably by mechanical means, to the extent that in some cases, as observed above, the ricasso stampings are almost illegible. As we will see below, this can in part be attributed to a strong ethos of 'spit-and-polish' which not all members of the RAF in the interwar years appreciated.

Four examples stood out from the rest of our 82 recorded examples, two being a Sanderson made bayonet marked 'R.A.F. 1. 5552' and the RFI-manufactured example marked 'R.A.F. 1.[?] 6701'. Both were chrome-plated,<sup>23</sup> the first, according to family tradition, for use at the time of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.<sup>16</sup> All we can note here is that a Pathé News report of the new Queen's

Birthday Parade at RAF Uxbridge in 1952 shows airmen in the Honour Guard with Mk. III rifles and fixed P.07 bayonets, although whether these are chromed or not is impossible to say. The third notable example is exceptional in that in addition to the usual alpha-numeric serial number on the pommel (R.A.F./I. E./5652), the tang is marked 'LEU 259' (Figure 8). We interpret this as meaning it was issued to R.A.F. Leuchars, in Fife, where it was registered as (bayonet serial no.) 259. If we have read it correctly, it is the only example of an R.A.F. P.07 marked for a specific base. As for the fourth, this was the oddest in many ways. A Wilkinson product dated January 1919, and pommel marked 'RAF/I.A/4027', pommel and crossguard are painted a gloss black, and the regulation walnut wood grips replaced with a pair of brass ones, the scabbard locket and chape having been painted a light blue. A dedicated analysis of this piece suggests that it spent some time after British and RAF service with a Middle Eastern honour guard.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, bayonets do not exist without the rifles to fit them to, but an on-line search of weapons-related discussion groups and auction sites for RAF-marked rifles revealed only six examples. One was a Mk. III rifle, with a butt-disc marked '32 HQ WAD RAF 1 40'; the other a Mk. V rifle, a modified version of the Mk. III rifle introduced in 1922 re-designated as Rifle No. 1 Mk. V in 1926, which retained the nose-cap of the Mk. III rifle, allowing the fixing of a P.07 bayonet, with a butt-disc marked 'RAF ADME 303'. The first should be interpreted as: 'Rifle 32, Head Quarters, RAF Waddington (Lincs); issued Jan. 1940', the second signifying the rifle 303 held at the Aboukir (or Aircraft?) Depot, Middle East, a RAF depot active until 7th October 1925. This might suggest that RAF rifles were held at Stores Depots until required, and butt-disc marked when issued. The other four RAF-marked rifles are all of Pattern 1914, which has a different bayonet mounting system designed for the Pattern 1913 bayonet and which were apparently distributed to the RAF on a limited scale in 1939 (see below). Yet, despite extensive searching, we have failed to locate more than one alleged example of a Pattern 1913 bayonet with RAF markings—we say 'alleged' as we have yet to see full documentary evidence for this and so nothing more can be said.<sup>25</sup>

## Analysis

Our collection of the physical data for these RAF-marked bayonets as reported above was accompanied by a search of the available historical sources relating to the RAF regarding the issue and use of bayonets between its formation in 1918 and the creation of the RAF Regiment in 1942. One avenue that was extensively explored was that the seven alpha-numeric series identifiers referred to seven individual RAF depots or area commands, each holding a potential maximum of 9999 rifles and bayonets. This seemed unlikely as by 1920 the RAF had already streamlined its logistical supply system with the agreement to create a dedicated 'Stores Branch' responsible for providing all those items necessary for the efficient running of the new air arm.<sup>26</sup>

This branch had, it seems, evolved from the six or seven 'Stores Depots' (SD) that supplied the RFC and presumably served the RAF at its foundation.<sup>27</sup> The number was reduced to four only by 1922 through the disposal of no longer needed equipment and demobilization, with SD No. 2 (Altrincham), allocated in 1924 to storing weapons, ammunition, and explosives as part of a process of assigning particular depots to storing bulk stocks of specific materiel and acting as distribution centres for RAF stations at home and overseas.<sup>28</sup> This could support our assumption the alpha-numeric system of marking was a stock-taking mark applied at a central depot. In which case this was most obviously SD No. 2 after its creation in 1924, as otherwise we might expect more bayonets to have been marked for individual 'Stores Depots'.

As all Mk. III rifles and P.07 bayonets were initially issued to the War Office for Army use,<sup>29</sup> it seemed logical to assume that those marked for service with the RAF were passed over to that body in the closing stages of World War One, either when the RAF was established as an independent arm of service on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1918, or soon after hostilities ceased that November, when the British Army held vast disposable stocks of P.07 bayonets. It was not thought likely that these bayonets came to the RAF after an intervening period with its predecessor, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Although anecdotal evidence indicates that airborne observers used Mk. III rifles in aerial combat at an early stage in the war, as far as we can ascertain the RFC was never supplied officially with these rifles and/or their bayonets. Working, therefore, on the basis that these bayonets were transferred to the RAF soon after its formation rather than being passed on from the RFC, it was hoped that some information regarding the transfer would be contained in either Army Council Instructions (ACI's) or Air Ministry Orders (AMO's) dating to the immediate post-Great War period. An initial but thorough search at the National Archives followed by another of the AMO's in the British Library, however, failed to locate anything that was relevant to this question.<sup>30</sup>

This stimulated our archaeo-historical approach to the problem. That is to say, using the evidence of the bayonets as archaeological artefacts with the official historical sources as well as the sub-historical record, namely literary material, in an attempt to ascertain and comprehend their contemporary environment. A first step was to resolve the simple question of what sections of the RAF in the interwar period may have needed some 70,000 P.07 bayonets and we must assume the rifles to go with them. We can, with a high degree of confidence, leave out of account the six RAF armoured car companies established in 1922 as a ground-attack force for combined operations in the Middle East. As far as it can be determined, these men relied on machine guns of one form or another, and in-ground actions were supported by members of the regular army and/or the various tribal- and/or ethnic-based levies, supplied with their equipment by the Colonial Office, not the RAF.<sup>31</sup>

This left us with the RAF itself, for which there is photographic and literary evidence that its aircraftmen were issued with Mk. III rifles and presumably the bayonets to fit these in the interwar period. However, although there were some

304,000 members of the RAF at the end of 1918, there were a scant 29,730 by January 1920, the numbers remaining at about that figure until 1934, before expanding gradually to 175,692 in September 1939.<sup>32</sup> Thus for the inter-war period, the numbers simply did not add up, as our calculated figure of RAF-marked bayonets, at around 70,000, would be far in excess of the total serving RAF personnel until the immediate pre-World War Two period. What is more, in 1937, as the Czech crisis made a potential European war more and more likely, the Air Ministry was ordered to release the rifles in its possession for Army use, except for those required for recruit training, competition shooting and ceremonial purposes, with the intent to replace these by a '*light repeating automatic weapon fired from the shoulder*'.<sup>33</sup> The type of rifle to be released is not specified, but as photographic evidence indicates the Mk. III rifle was in use by the RAF in the interwar years and was the standard military service rifle at the time, then we can assume these 'surrendered' rifles were the same model.

As it was, almost two years later, in January 1939, after the RAF had surrendered the required stocks of rifles, the Air Ministry decided that airmen serving overseas should be issued with a rifle as a personal weapon, with stocks of rifles and revolvers established at home stations for airmen on guard or defence duties.<sup>34</sup> Again, the rifle type was not specified although they were evidently supplied with bayonets as RAF HQ Far East specifically requested that in their particular case bayonets were not required.<sup>35</sup> To muddy the waters further in trying to understand the history of these RAF-marked bayonets is the knowledge that until 1941, the defence and security of RAF bases was a responsibility of the British Army. While the losses of men and materiel at Dunkirk in 1940 had made this difficult if not impossible, neither was it high on the list of the Army's priorities, resulting in one airfield being guarded by '60 grooms of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps'.<sup>36</sup> This led to the proposal in November 1941 that a dedicated 'Aerodrome Defence Corps' of some 79,000 be formed to defend fighter and other airfields against a German invasion that envisioned their capture by airborne troops,<sup>37</sup> a proposal that later gave birth to the RAF Regiment itself. As it is, one RAF marked P.07 bayonet with an under-the pommel marking 'RAF/1/749' and a pommel marked simply '749', has one grip marked 'RAF REGT' for the RAF Regiment (Figure 9).<sup>38</sup> It was presumably 'inherited' from



FIGURE 9. Left grip with 'RAF REGT.' stamp on a P.07 with an under pommel marking 'RAF/1/749' (source: courtesy of Mr. V J. Donnelly).



its predecessor, the short-lived 'Aerodrome Defence Force, which certainly used Mk. III rifles.<sup>39</sup> Evidently, though, the RAF retained a suitable stock of Mk. III rifles and P.07 bayonets for parade purposes. A Pathé newsreel of a parade at RAF Uxbridge in 1952 in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's official birthday showed quite clearly members of the RAF with Mk. III rifles and fixed P.07 bayonets.<sup>40</sup>

### The RAF and its bayonets in the interwar period: the Sub-historical evidence

As it is, the writings of T.E. Lawrence, regarding his two periods of service with the RAF as an Aircraftman, first as J.H. Ross between 1922 and 1923, and then as T.E. Shaw between 1925 and 1935, throw an interesting light of the RAF and its bayonets in this interwar period. These make it clear that bayonets were deemed a necessary part of an ordinary aircraftman's equipment, worn for specific parades and carried on rifles for guard duty. His first period provided the principal material for his excoriating review of the life of a RAF recruit while at Uxbridge as set out in *The Mint*, although this does contain material relating to his second period of service, his experiences then and later being set out in his personal correspondence at the time. In all these writings Lawrence stresses repeatedly what he saw as the inanity of an airborne force being supplied with bayonets and in particular the need to keep these in good order.

To begin with, Lawrence mentions in the context of his arrival in 1922 at the RAF training centre at Uxbridge how he glanced 'back over' the bayonet of the gate guard indicating it was fixed to a rifle.<sup>41</sup> Then, while at Uxbridge, he makes a wry comment on attending a church parade with 'bayonets weighing down our left haunches (bayonets are essential for divine service).'<sup>42</sup> This is followed by a reference to what Lawrence conceivably saw as a bayonet fetish among senior members of the RAF – at that time all retired infantry or similar officers - in roundly condemning the way that the 'Air Council' as it then was:

... have just decreed that the black parts of bayonets be henceforward burnished. ... Rack their brains as they will, the irks cannot connect polished bayonets with flying efficiency. ... The Guards polish their bayonets. But what a mess the Guards 'd make of our job ...<sup>43</sup>

This is a highly important comment relevant to our analysis. To begin with 'irks', normally written as 'erks', was RAF slang for an ordinary aircraftman, and so it is clear that these men were issued with bayonets. Secondly, by 'black' Lawrence is probably referring to the blackened finish found with newly made bayonets sand-blasted in accordance with an announcement in the List of Changes, 4th February 1915. This could be removed by using an abrasive, either by hand or mechanically. It is just possible that the decision to polish those sand-blasted bayonets held in store by the RAF was subjected to just such a procedure using a machine to speed things up, thus explaining why so many RAF-marked bayonets have near-illegible ricasso



markings. Rifle drill and 'musketry' practice are also mentioned at two places in *The Mint*, and Lawrence talks of being on guard duty with a rifle once.<sup>44</sup>

In his second period of service, as Aircraftman Shaw, Lawrence bemoaned the problems of travelling by rail from Uxbridge to Cranwell in full kit with a bayonet – 'A bayonet - for the Great Northern Railway, ye gods!'<sup>45</sup> and complains how the life of a recruit was:

'...no slug's life ... Inside the hangar they keep us for the eight hours of an ordinary workshop: and before and after that there's our own cleaning, bed-making, hut-tidying: another hour and a half. Add, much grugged, an occasional hour wasted over equipment or bayonet for some posh parade'.<sup>46</sup>

He continued to disparage the need for RAF airmen to be issued with the bayonet in his personal correspondence at this time. As he noted in a letter to E. Palmer, dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1925, written from the second induction period in the recruits barracks, at Uxbridge, two days prior he had been issued with a bayonet, and polished this, and had spent the previous day, a Sunday, also polishing his bayonet, while in a second letter also to Palmer, on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1925, he commented on the obligation of wearing a belt and bayonet for church parade.<sup>47</sup> He went even further on his perceived uselessness of the bayonet for aircraftmen while stationed at Karachi where he served as a clerk in the Engine Repair Section between 1927 and 1928. For instance, in a letter to Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, then Chief of the Air Staff, and a close acquaintance of his, he commented that wearing a bayonet on church parade was like having a 'wooden leg', suggesting that Trenchard should 'Have a bayonet put in your 'In Tray' every morning and say to yourself, 'I must get rid of that today'.<sup>48</sup> He even wrote a letter to Captain B.H. Liddell Hart, the acknowledged military historian and theorist, on the subject on 4th July 1929, noting that each bayonet cost 16/- and in the absence of a buffing wheel took an hour in each month to properly maintain, indicating he had already conveyed his thoughts on the matter to Trenchard.<sup>49</sup>

Lawrence naturally does not report either the bayonet or the rifle type he was issued with. Yet as already indicated, the very limited interwar photographic evidence for members of the RAF with rifles and/or bayonets indicates that this was the Mk. III rifle with a P.07 bayonet.<sup>50</sup> That the interwar RAF needed such weaponry is to be expected. At the time it lacked a dedicated ground-installation guard or protection force, but was meant to look to its own resources as were available from each base for such purposes, the Army being reluctant to undertake that role, and the Air Force high command itself not wishing to draw the Army into its operations.<sup>51</sup> Thus post-1918, and certainly by 1922, the RAF had by some means or the other obtained its own rifles and bayonets for guard duty and base defence. What is more, in 1927, instead of the khaki-coloured Pattern 1908 webbing set it had used hitherto, the Air Ministry adopted its own version in 'RAF Blue-grey' which included a frog for the P.07 bayonet, as shown in [Figures 10](#) and [11](#).<sup>52</sup> In a sense this made RAF guards look less like a poor relative of the Army.



FIGURE 10. Right side of an RAF P.07 bayonet marked 'RAF/1.C./9235' with a frog, 'Web Equipment, R.A.F., Pattern, 1925' (note that the scabbard locket should be fitted between the two loops on the frog, not above these as shown here) (source: courtesy of 'Tommy's Militaria', UK).



FIGURE 11. As above, showing the left side and rear of the frog, ink stamped A.M. (Air Ministry) with faded numbers beneath, perhaps '??/A/1213' (source: courtesy of 'Tommy's Militaria', UK).

As it was, though, as we have seen, within 10 years of this webbing being distributed and a potential European war became more and more likely, the Air Ministry was ordered in March 1937 to release its stocks of rifles for Army use owing to the shortage of its intended replacement, the No.4 rifle, the RAF retaining only limited numbers for specified purposes, e.g., training, drill, guard duties, and parades. The Mk. III was, after all, still the standard British Army rifle. In other words, the *terminus ante quem* for the issue and use by the RAF of the Mk. III rifle and the P.07 bayonet can be fixed as around March 1937. But as we have also noted above, almost two years later, in January 1939, as questions were raised over the defence of RAF bases, the Air Ministry decided that airmen serving overseas should be issued with a rifle as a personal weapon, and stocks of both rifles and revolvers were established at home stations for airmen on guard or defence duties. Again, no specific type of rifle was named. Bearing in mind that the British Army in the 1937–1939 period and into 1940 was in sore need of Mk. III rifles this is the best explanation for why Pattern 1914 rifles held in store since 1917 as a 'war reserve'<sup>53</sup> are sometimes found with RAF markings and while there is also, allegedly, a single RAF-marked Pattern 1913 bayonet, the type fitted

to this rifle. Certainly, the fact is that the RAF possessed rifles in the early years of World War Two, but apparently in limited numbers, if we are to judge from the situation at RAF Hornchurch in June 1940. There, the 'Station Defence Force' consisted of one officer and 154 enlisted men armed with rifles and machine guns as well as Bofors anti-aircraft cannons.<sup>54</sup> Yet we should not forget how, as noted above, RAF Uxbridge at least still had enough Mk. III rifles and their bayonets to 'present arms' with these at a Queen's Birthday parade in 1952.

## Conclusions

What, then, are we to make of these RAF-marked P.07 bayonets? We have seen that three of them and what is probably a P.07 scabbard are marked as being 'in-store' at the RAF Number 1 Stores Depot at Kidbrooke, in 1920 in the case of the scabbard, and in 1921 for the bayonets. These marks were cancelled out, presumably at the time they were re-marked with the 'standard' RAF-marking system applied to all the 82 known examples. These three bayonets also have a lined-through 'sold-out-of-service' mark', which we interpret as signifying their passing from Army to RAF ownership. Thus, 1920-21 seems appropriate for the earliest provable period for when the RAF first received stocks of Pattern 1907 bayonets. From Lawrence's account of his experiences as an 'erk' with the RAF, first as J.H. Ross (1922-1923), and then as T.E. Shaw (1925 and 1935), it is clear that ordinary aircraftmen were by 1922 each supplied with a bayonet, which they were obliged to keep in 'spick-and-span' condition. Then, there is the fact that in 1924, Stores Depot No. 2 at Altrincham became the storage centre for the stocks of arms, ammunition, and bombs held by the RAF as part of a rationalization process by which individual depots held specific stocks of material for satisfying the needs of individual RAF stations. Perhaps, then, the period 1922-1924, seems as good a period as any for the introduction of what we identify as stock marks on these RAF bayonets, and probably their extensive re-furbishing when placed into centralized storage. We assume this refurbishing involved the extreme polishing producing the bright blades that many of these bayonets display. That said, the three examples we know of with 'SD 1' marks for 1921, indicating storage at RAF Number 1 Stores Depot that year were not subjected to this process even though they were later marked in the 'standard' RAF way. We might tentatively speculate this indicates the vast bulk of the RAF marked bayonets were issued in readily-scrubbed form sometime after 1921, and these ones already in RAF possession were not subjected to that process.

As for their purpose, these bayonets, and logically the Mk. III rifles to go with them, were, from the evidence of Lawrence and photographs, used for guard and parade duty at the various RAF bases, and, we might imagine, ground defence if necessary. But we cannot find a satisfactory explanation as to why perhaps as many as 70,000 were held in stock for RAF use, nor can we determine when exactly these were received by the RAF, except that supplies were on hand at SD No. 1 from 1920/

1921. As we have also seen, the slow development of the No.4 rifle, the intended replacement for the Mk. III rifle for the British Army, meant that during the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1937 the RAF was obliged to surrender its stocks of rifles that same year for Army use, except for those needed for training and ceremonial purposes. There is clear evidence that in early 1939 the RAF was re-armed on a limited basis with Pattern 1914 rifles for airfield-defence and marked for service with that body. However, it is not at all clear if they were supplied with the bayonets for these also, with only one alleged example being mentioned on an internet web-site (see above), although it might simply be that any bayonets so provided were not marked as being in RAF service. Be that as it may, the creation of the RAF Regiment in 1942, armed with No. 4 rifles and bayonets, took away the responsibility of individual RAF stations to provide for their own defence, and so the RAF was at this point left with limited stocks of Mk. III rifles and P.07 bayonets for a variety of specified purposes, including ceremonial duties; hence their appearance at the Queen's Birthday Parade at Uxbridge in 1952. Beyond that we can go no further, except to speculate that as it would have been logical for the British Army to remove the RAF markings from the bayonets they received in 1937, then the examples we have studied are probably survivors of the limited stocks the RAF held for their own purposes after that year.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to those many members of the Great War Forum ([www.greatwarforum.org](http://www.greatwarforum.org)) who went above and beyond the call of duty in supplying details of RAF bayonets in their own collections as well as recording data of items for sale on-line. The sources for the photographs shown here are indicated in the captions, and we are indebted to those who made these available to us: R.G.J. Dee and Mr. V. J. Donnelly for items in their own collections and to 'Tommy's Militaria', UK, for their photographs of an RAF bayonet with its RAF blue frog. Research into ACI's and AMO's at The National Archives, The National Army Museum and the British Library was performed by Dr. Simon Fowler ([www.history-man.co.uk](http://www.history-man.co.uk)). All other documentary and literary researches were done by the writers.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> K. M. Oliver, *Through Adversity: The history of The RAF Regiment* (Forces & Corporate Publishing, Ltd., 1997), 47 and 52–3: these rifles are shown on the regiment's official insignia and use a quite different form of bayonet and bayonet attachment to the P.07, and so are not interchangeable. As will be shown below, though, the RAF Regiment was apparently armed at least in part after its formation with Mk. III rifles and P.07 bayonets.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Spiers, 'Reforming the Infantry of the Line 1900–1914', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 59/238 (1981), 82–94: 91;

M. Ford, 'Marksmanship, Officer–Man Relations, and the Short Magazine Lee-Enfield', *War in History* 23/3 (2016), 278–29.

<sup>3</sup> This nose-cap fitting system was designed by Superintendent Colonel H. S. S. Watkin of the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield, with patent approval 17th August 1901 (number 14,163). It was described as 'protecting the front end of a rifle barrel from the strains due to the fixing and unfixing of the sword bayonet', but quite possibly was influenced by the similar fitting shown and described in the Waffenfabrik Mauser GB patent 21546 of 1895 introducing a method of suspending a bayonet beneath a rifle barrel to eliminate barrel vibration

- and so a rifle's accuracy when fired. Somewhat confusingly, despite their length, both the knife-style Pattern 1888 and 1903 bayonets were officially designated as 'Sword bayonets'.
- <sup>4</sup> <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1908/feb/24/index.html> (accessed 17th March 2021).
- <sup>5</sup> A. Hutton, *Fixed Bayonets: A Complete System of Fence for the British Magazine Rifle*, (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1890), 125, and 131–132; note also the War Office, *Instruction in Bayonet Fighting for Competitions* HMSO, 1911. By 1917, the niceties of bayonet fencing were well and truly out of fashion, e.g., D. Van Nostrand, *Bayonet Training Manual used by the British Forces* (New York: Van Nostrand Co., 1917), 34–35: 'It is apparent that bayonet fighting as taught for trench warfare abroad lacks all the niceties of the art of bayonet fencing prescribed in our manual. *In bayonet fighting no "fouls" are known. The only rule to follow is: "Get after your man, put him out of action by any means at your command."*
- <sup>6</sup> E.g., Hutton, *Fixed Bayonets*, v, on the Pattern 1888 bayonet: 'The weakness of our new weapon is its shortness as compared to its predecessors... the present rifle [the Lee Metford] with bayonet fixed, measures only five feet one ...[when] certain Continental armies, notably the French, are adhering to the longer arm'.
- <sup>7</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1915-05-19/debates/4f940a24-886b-4388-a0a5-9c1ed15a71e3/Bayonets/> (accessed 17th March 2021).
- <sup>8</sup> For the development of the P.07 bayonet see J. M. Ballard and J. Bennett, 'An Investigation of the Weights of Pattern 1907 Bayonets made in the UK around the First World War Period', *Arms and Armour*, 14:2 (2017), 206–202: 207–209.
- <sup>9</sup> I. D. Skennerton, 303 *Pattern 1914 Rifle and Sniping Variants* (Australia: Labrador, 1998); C.R. Stratton, *British Enfield Rifles, Vol. 4, Pattern 1914 and U.S. Model of 1917* (North Cape Publications, Inc., 2007, 2nd edition). The future issue of the Pattern 1914 rifle was already being questioned in the Parliament on 18th February 1914: [https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1914/feb/18/new-rifle#S5CV0058Po\\_19140218\\_HOC\\_123/](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1914/feb/18/new-rifle#S5CV0058Po_19140218_HOC_123/) (accessed 17th March 2021)
- <sup>10</sup> I. D. Skennerton, *The Lee-Enfield Story: The Lee-Metford, Lee-Enfield S.M.L.E. and No. 4 Series Rifles and Carbines, 1880 to the Present* (Greenhill 1993), 175.
- <sup>11</sup> Skennerton, *Lee-Enfield Story*, 177.
- <sup>12</sup> It is last recorded in use as a standard service weapon until withdrawn in early 2020 with the para-military Uttar Pradesh Police: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-01-27/Indian-police-bid-adieu-to-obsolete-but-historic-British-era-rifles-NAL61DcaRi/index.html> (accessed 17 January 2021), making it one of the longest-lived ever military rifles.
- <sup>13</sup> Ballard and Bennett, 'Investigation', 207–209.
- <sup>14</sup> Ballard and Bennett, 'Investigation', 212.
- <sup>15</sup> *Instructions for Armourers 1897*, 77.
- <sup>16</sup> *Instructions for Armourers 1931*, 26–27 repeated verbatim at 52–53.
- <sup>17</sup> The same scabbard could be used with the Pattern 1913 bayonet for fitting to the Pattern 1914 rifle, although as we have not yet identified for certain a Pattern 1913 bayonet marked for the RAF, we assume it was for a P.07.
- <sup>18</sup> T. Stone, *Royal Air Force Logistics during the Second World War: Transformation, Sustainment and Flexibility* (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Exeter), 2016, 47–48.
- <sup>19</sup> Stone, *Logistics*, 52–53. In 1936, the RAF Stores Branch was re-styled to the Equipment Branch: L. O'Hara, 'The Early Days', *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal* 35 (2005), 8–18: 18.
- <sup>20</sup> W. S. Churchill, *The World Crisis, Vol I: 1911–1914* (Courier Dover Publications, 2020), 521.
- <sup>21</sup> S. Ball, 'Britain and the Decline of the International Control of Small Arms in the Twentieth Century', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47/4, (2012), 812–837: 821.
- <sup>22</sup> S. Ball, 'Decline', 831.
- <sup>23</sup> It is not certain when this practice of chroming parade bayonets began although it was certainly used by the United States Marine Corps from the 1950's: see W. A. Babb, '8th and I Parade Season owes origin to General Sheppard', *Fortitudine* 15/1 (1985), 12–14: 14
- <sup>24</sup> J. M. Ballard, 'A British Pattern 1907 Bayonet, Presumably Refurbished for a Mid-East Honor Guard', *Journal of the Society of American Bayonet Collectors*, 109 (2019), 3–5
- <sup>25</sup> <https://www.gunboards.com/threads/raf-marked-p14.265139/> (accessed 18th December 2020), which provides neither any details of the marking, never mind a photograph.
- <sup>26</sup> L. O'Hara, 'The Early Days', *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal* 35 (2005), 8–18: 17.
- <sup>27</sup> O'Hara, 'Early Days', 13.
- <sup>28</sup> O'Hara, 'Early Days', 18; T. Stone, *Royal Air Force Logistics During the Second World War: Transformation, Sustainment and Flexibility* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 2016), 52–53.
- <sup>29</sup> Those passed on to the army units in Australia and New Zealand all have official 'Sold-out-of-service' marks on them indicating they had been commissioned originally for the British War Office and then passed over to these bodies.
- <sup>30</sup> See the Appendix for a list of unpublished documents researched for this article.

- <sup>31</sup> On which see e.g., C. Morris, 'The RAF Armoured Car Companies in Iraq (mostly 1921-1947)', *Royal Air Force Historical Society Journal* 48 (2010), 20-38.
- <sup>32</sup> M. Longoria, *A Historical View of Air Policing Doctrine: Lessons from the British experience between the wars, 1919-1939* (unpublished thesis, The School of Advanced Airpower Studies, AL, 1992), 12, for the 1918-1920 figures; the estimates for 1934-1939 are from a government document published in-line at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/767495/04338.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767495/04338.pdf) (accessed 19th January 2021); and the precise September 1939 figure is given in *Royal Air Force Personnel Statistics for the Period 3rd September 1939 to 1st September 1945* (London: Air Ministry, 1946), Section I, Table I, 1-5.
- <sup>33</sup> Oliver, *Adversity*, 19-20, quoting Air Council 75 (PRO) of 23rd March, 1937.
- <sup>34</sup> Oliver, *Adversity*, 21-22.
- <sup>35</sup> Oliver, *Adversity*, 22: stress added.
- <sup>36</sup> J. P. Campbell, 'The German Airborne Threat to the United Kingdom', *War in History*, 4/4, 1997, 411-433: 429.
- <sup>37</sup> D. A. Pocock, 'The Royal Air Force Regiment: The Formative Years to 1946', *Journal of the Royal Air Force Historical Society* 15 (1995), 6-32: 11; with Campbell, 'The German Airborne Threat', 433.
- <sup>38</sup> See <https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/218466-royal-air-force-marked-bayonets/page/3/> (accessed 18th March 2021)
- <sup>39</sup> See, e.g., Imperial War Museums photograph IWM CH 4575 (accessed 18th March 2021).
- <sup>40</sup> <https://www.britishtpathe.com/video/stills/r-a-f-queens-birthday-parade-parading-the-queens> (accessed 20th December 2020).
- <sup>41</sup> T. E. Lawrence, *The Mint*, J. Cape, 1955, Part I, Chap. 2.
- <sup>42</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, Part I, Chap. 15.
- <sup>43</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, Part I, Chap. 28.
- <sup>44</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, Part II, Chaps. 6, 13, and 20.
- <sup>45</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, Part III, Chap. 1.
- <sup>46</sup> Lawrence, *The Mint*, Part III, Chap. 8.
- <sup>47</sup> D. Garnett (ed.) *The Letters of T E Lawrence* (London: J. Cape, 1938), 480-482, and 483-485.
- <sup>48</sup> L.S. Rivett, 'Lawrence of Arabia: Ross and Shaw of the Royal Air Force', *Journal of the Royal Air Force Historical Society*, 17, 1997, 31-39: 34 and 39. These comments are probably in the 120 lines omitted from the original in the published version of his letter to Trenchard from Karachi dated 1st May, 1928, a letter that includes the passage, 'We grumble—over customs of dress which you've inherited from the older services': cf. Garnet 598.
- <sup>49</sup> Garnet, *Letters*, 664-665.
- <sup>50</sup> E.g., <http://www.oldhaltonians.co.uk/pages/news/Halton%20Story.pdf> (accessed 21st March 2021)
- <sup>51</sup> D. A. Pocock, 'The Royal Air Force Regiment: the Formative Years to 1946', *Journal of the Royal Air Force Historical Society* 15, 1995, 8-33: 8.
- <sup>52</sup> *Air Ministry Weekly Order No. 793/1927*, the equipment to have the Stores Reference 23/61.
- <sup>53</sup> B. N. Canfield, *A Collectors Guide to Winchester in the Service* (Rhode Island: Andrew Mowbray, 1991), 59.
- <sup>54</sup> H. T. Sutton, *Raiders Approach. The Fighting Tradition of Royal Air Force Station Hornchurch and Sutton's Farm* (Aldershot, 1956), 102-103 with 132-133.

## Appendix I. Unpublished documents checked for this research

The National Archives

Army Council Instructions 1919-1925 - WO 293/10-16

Army Council Orders 1919-1925 Nos. 251-500 - WO 123/12

Army Orders 1919-1925 - WO 123/63-67

Air Ministry Orders: Weekly Orders 1919-1922 - AIR 72/1-4

Index to weekly orders 1918-1946 - AIR 72/90

National Army Museum

Army Council Instructions 1919-1929

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