

Western Military Expatriates in the Armed Forces of the UAE

History and Impact, 1965-2024

by Athol Yates

DESCRIPTION:

Today, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces is recognised as the most proficient military set-up in the Arab world, recently engaged in operations in Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen, and in the fight against ISIS. This book examines a pivotal component in how the UAE built such effectiveness: Western military professionals embedded in the Emirati forces. Some of these expatriates have commanded major military formations, others served as high-ranking staff, piloted front-line aircraft, developed and delivered training, or advised senior Emirati officers.

The first such individuals arrived in 1965, when they were engaged to establish the state's initial professional military force. Expatriates have since served continuously to the present day. This volume traces their history through 14 case studies, covering the period between 1965 and 2023. It offers a comprehensive picture of the expatriates' backgrounds, the rationale behind their recruitment, and how they have been utilized. This information provides the foundation for the book's key research question: to what degree and how have such individuals helped to generate a sustained military advantage for the Emirati military?

The implications arising from this study are important, particularly for the UAE as it contemplates the potential replacement or phasing out of Western expatriates. They are equally consequential for Western defence policy-makers seeking innovative ways to develop the capabilities of friendly advanced nations, and for the more than a thousand expatriates currently serving in the Gulf who aspire to increase their influence.

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Athol Yates heads the Institute for International and Civil Security at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi. His research focuses on the UAEs internal security and national security policy, military history, and defence industry. He is the author of books on the history of the UAE security forces, including *Evolution of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates* and *The Military and Police Forces of the Trucial States and United Arab Emirates 1951-1980*.

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