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LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay

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The Americans, meanwhile, built a more balanced fleet, able to starve Japan of supplies as well as defeat its forces on land, in the air, and beneath the sea.

When Kuehn writes of being collegial and collaborative, this reviewer thought of a perpetuation of the status quo, since I was of the opinion that military innovation is only the by-product of egotistic individuals who are unable get along with their fellow officers. Billy Mitchell, J. F. C. Fuller, George Patton, and Pete Ellis readily come to mind. Kuehn points out yet another irony as well—that the U.S. Navy of the 1920s thrived because of financial constraints. All naval officers with pulses and open eyes could see that they could no longer rely on their navy's simply being bigger than its prospective opponents. Hence the institution entertained all serious ideas of reform, so that the rebels, so to speak, became the norm.

Although this is an excellent book, it is not perfect. The discussion of flying-deck cruisers (a model never put into production) is too long. Chapter 8, however, which compares innovation or lack of it in the navies of Britain, Japan, and Germany, is about the best writing I have seen on military development in the interwar years.

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Kozak, Warren. *LeMay: The Life and Wars of General Curtis LeMay*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2009. 434pp. \$27.95

Warren Kozak captures the true essence of General Curtis LeMay. Like many great leaders, LeMay was a paradox, a vivid contrast of unique strengths and debilitating weaknesses. He was insecure, afraid of failure, always questioning his own decisions. LeMay hid his insecurities beneath a stern and gruff demeanor that gave the impression of confidence and strength. The antithesis of the stereotypical dashing American flyboy, “LeMay was dark, brooding, and forbidding. He rarely smiled, he spoke even less, and when he did, his words came out in a snarl.”

Always seeking to learn as much as he could, LeMay not only flew airplanes but took time to service and repair them alongside his maintenance crew. He made himself the best navigator in the U.S. Army Air Corps. For example, he successfully located the USS *Utah* in a 120,000-square-mile area of the Pacific, and he found the Italian ocean liner SS *Rex* in a large Atlantic storm. As the United States entered World War II LeMay commanded the 305th Bomber Group, which began with only three aircraft to train thirty-five crews. He was a stern disciplinarian who demanded excellence.

LeMay was always able to cut to the heart of the matter. He devised radically new tactics that improved bombing accuracy and reduced aircraft losses. To build trust and confidence within his crew, he led the missions himself. His success was noticed, and as Generals Hap Arnold's and Ira Eaker's “fireman” he was given the toughest challenges to overcome.

Kozak goes on to describe LeMay's development of Strategic Air Command (SAC), which supported his long-held

vision that the best way to avoid war was through strength and readiness, as reflected in SAC's motto: "Peace Is Our Profession." LeMay felt he was one of the few people who understood that the United States was at war with the Soviet Union and that the only way SAC could provide the security that the nation needed was to be prepared to go to nuclear war at a moment's notice. Everything he did was focused on that objective.

After relinquishing command at SAC, LeMay served as the U.S. Air Force's vice chief of staff and then chief of staff during the Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson administrations. In the later years, LeMay worked for Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who, ironically, had once worked for LeMay as a targeting analyst. The relationship between these two men was often confrontational, but despite their differences McNamara called LeMay "the finest military strategist this nation ever produced."

The last major chapter in LeMay's life is the one probably best remembered and yet least reflective of LeMay's internal values. LeMay's decision to run for vice president on the Independent ticket with Alabama's Governor George Wallace confounded everyone, including his own wife, daughter, and closest associates. Kozak maintains there is no evidence of LeMay being a racist and maintains that the only reason he chose to run was to split the vote, ensuring that Democratic presidential candidate, Hubert Humphrey, would not win the election and so continue the policies of the Johnson administration. By running, LeMay believed, he was taking "one last chance to rise up and do battle" against the "defense intellectuals,"

whom he believed would cut the U.S. deterrent until the Soviets could win a general war.

This book's greatest value might be that it offers an opportunity to consider objectively the impact that Curtis E. LeMay (the youngest general in modern American history and its longest serving) had on the events that shaped this nation for many years to come.

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Willmott, H. P. *The Great Crusade: A New Complete History of the Second World War*. Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2008. 520pp. \$17.60

The Great Crusade is a comprehensive military history of World War II. With a focus on strategic-level military operations and a global perspective, this work provides a particularly complete and nationally balanced account of the war. H. P. Willmott achieves his ambitious goal of providing "a basic reference and guide to the war" that offers balance among the major fronts of the conflict and illuminates "why events unfolded in the manner in which they did."

The Great Crusade discusses conflict between countries and systems, not between leaders or equipment. It is about "how states make war and the basis on which services planned, executed and either won or lost campaigns." Willmott distinguishes between the use of available forces by military commanders to win campaigns and the use of national power to win wars. National and international political factors, beginning in 1931, get the attention they deserve. How and why countries joined and left the conflict (including the