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American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950–1953

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view Norstad as an American commander only. The details cannot be developed within the confines of a review, but in the end Norstad was forced to walk the plank—though the final jump was delayed for a period of two months by the administration's need for his assistance during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Robert Jordan has produced an important work that is thoroughly researched, nicely written, and most insightful. No doubt it will be the definitive biography of Lauris Norstad—Cold War airman, strategist, and diplomat. The book will also be of interest to those involved in the study of civil-military relations, especially in these years of increased commitment of U.S. military forces in multinational or international interventions.

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Crane, Conrad C. *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950–1953*. Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2000. 252pp. \$35

Conrad Crane is a research professor for military strategy at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, and formerly a professor of military history at the U.S. Military Academy. Crane previously wrote *Bombs, Cities, and Civilians: American Airpower Strategy in World War II* (1993), which is widely respected for its rich and adroit analysis. *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950–1953* is a comprehensive, thoroughly researched treatment of the many issues that the newly constituted U.S. Air Force faced as a result of having to fight its first war as an independent service—a war that it

was not doctrinally or materially prepared for, and that the service had neither anticipated nor especially wanted to fight. Crane logically takes the reader through the war from the prehostilities period, which generally set the stage for the limited character of the war and specifically established the character of the Air Force's contribution; the opening moves and initial setbacks; the miraculous end-around at Inchon and subsequent march to the Yalu; the bitter winter of 1950–51; and finally to the stalemate along the thirty-eighth parallel.

Crane analyzes the performance of the Air Force in conducting air warfare in a regional, limited conflict at a time when the service was focused on strategic nuclear war and restricted by government policy as to the resources that could be allocated to Korea. It was a condition that the Air Force would again confront in Vietnam. The Korean War presented the Air Force with a myriad of challenges, not the least of which was the attempt to meet high expectations for operational effectiveness based on results obtained during World War II.

However, the very nature of the new conflict constrained that effectiveness. A classic example of the limited nature of the Korean War was the prohibition against crossing the Yalu River to engage enemy forces or interdict lines of communication. Crane also takes great pains to highlight how austere were the resources made available to the Korean area of operations, because the Air Force was required to maintain the bulk of the active component in a ready status to respond to other worldwide threats. This requirement was the catalyst for many issues that arose during the conduct of the war, among them the decision to recall to active duty large numbers of aircrewmembers who had served in World War II and

were in many cases not keen to leave their families and jobs to serve in an undeclared “police action.”

In addition, Crane recognizes, the Air Force was challenged by interservice rivalry with the Army and the misunderstanding of its role in battlefield air interdiction, and to a lesser degree by negative perceptions created by strategic bombing at the expense of close air support for the Army. He points out that the frustration felt by Army commanders was exacerbated by the effective and dedicated close-air support provided to the Marines by their air component. The Army continually questioned why the Air Force could not provide for it the same level of effective support.

Crane also rightly recognizes the effective leadership and operational genius of the Far East Air Forces (FEAF) planner, Brigadier General Jacob Smart, who was able to produce a coherent interdiction strategy which he skillfully “sold” to the Army. Smart recognized the difficulty of conducting tactical interdiction operations against an entrenched enemy who did not require much in the way of supply. He reoriented FEAF’s interdiction efforts away from cutting tactical lines of communications to striking such operational targets as hydroelectric facilities, supply distribution centers, and other “deep” targets, all with some effect.

Crane’s book is a valuable compilation of the contributions of the Air Force in the prosecution of the Korean War. Crane reveals the warts but also gives glowing credit where it is due. Much more than a mere chronology, this is an insightful book that is a must-read for critical students of this conflict.

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Gardner, W. J. R. *Decoding History: The Battle of the Atlantic and Ultra*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1999. 263pp. \$34.95

For thirty years after the Second World War, historians said very little about the role of signals intelligence in the Battle of the Atlantic—because either they did not know about the Allies’ remarkable code-breaking successes, or they could not write about what they did know. That changed in 1974, when revelations about ULTRA exposed the full extent of the Allied penetration of Germany’s signals. Unfortunately, in the subsequent rush to rewrite the history books to include ULTRA, its significance was frequently inflated.

In this study of ULTRA and the Battle of the Atlantic, Gardner offers the most fully developed case yet that monocausal explanations for the Allied victory in this campaign are inadequate—that ULTRA was only one critical factor among many. Gardner provides two case studies to support his argument. The first demonstrates that Britain’s growing ascendancy over the U-boat in 1941 had many causes, most of which were unconnected with ULTRA. Just as important as code breaking, if not more so, was the tightening up of the convoy system and the German decision to shift U-boat operations westward in order to avoid the increasingly hostile environment around the British Isles. The greater availability of escort vessels and growing American assistance also played an important part in turning the tide in Britain’s favor in 1941. It is therefore a mistake to suggest, as some have done, that ULTRA alone may have saved as much as two million tons of shipping during this period.