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## Skyraider: The Douglas A-1 "Flying Dump Truck"

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structure. For example, this is one of the best brief accounts available of how the United States came to base strategic policy on a triad of delivery systems.

Equally invaluable for understanding the current impasse between the superpowers are Polmar's two chapters which treat present trends in weapon system development within the Soviet Union and the United States. Anyone interested in a straightforward and nonpartisan explanation of the obvious lack of coherence in US "strategic" policy would be well advised to read, for example, Polmar's description of the central issues in the MX debate. His treatment of the Trident program and of the decisions leading to a resurrection of cruise missiles as a viable technology are also valuable and instructive for anyone interested in understanding how these key weapon systems effect the newly emergent alternative to the traditional triad.

*Strategic Weapons: An Introduction* is very satisfactory in its treatment of the technological factors that drive the strategic arms race. It is less than satisfactory in dealing with the core question—the why of it all. Perhaps because the explanations of the why—of the key strategic policy decisions and the political assumptions on which they are based—are the most disputed and most emotionally provocative of all issues. Polmar has almost ignored them in this primer. By omitting the most contentious aspect of the subject, Polmar has ensured the nonpartisan character of his book. Anyone new to

these issues, no matter what side he takes in the current debate, can benefit from this work. However, we are also deprived of Polmar's insights into the degree to which political considerations, particularly intra- and inter-service rivalries, shape policy decisions that lead to the acceptance of one technology and the rejection of others. Clearly, the STRAT-X study of the late 1960s is a recognizable and classic case of this sort. Another vital issue slighted by Polmar is the integration of nuclear weapons into Nato and the implication of theater nuclear forces in negotiating with the Russians. Are such weapons "strategic" or not? After all, at least in the West, the political nature of "strategic" weapons will be decisive in shaping future policy.

Perhaps if this worthy book undergoes yet another revision, Mr. Polmar will treat the political aspect of these weapons with more depth. In the meantime this short treatise ought to be mandatory reading for all new students of the subject.

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Rausa, Rosario. *Skyraider: The Douglas A-1 "Flying Dump Truck."* Annapolis, Md.: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co., 1982, 239pp. \$17.95  
Known as the "Able Dog" in Korea and referred to as the "Spad" in Southeast Asia, the A-1 Skyraider was originally designed by Ed Heinemann and Douglas Aircraft engineers to take on the Japanese during the last campaigns against the

Nipponese homeland. Fortunately, the AD (the Skyraider's original designation) was not blooded against the Japanese because the war ended earlier than many expected. One might have expected the AD's career to be over before it started, but its distinguished flying and combat career was just beginning and would span at least four decades.

Author Rosario Rausa is well qualified to tell this saga. His previous book is the biography of the creator of the Able Dog as well as numerous other Douglas successes. His naval flying career included the AD which certainly gives him a visceral appreciation for the aircraft's character and performance in combat.

Like other World War II-vintage aircraft, the AD's creation has a legend of being designed virtually overnight. The author verifies the AD's original design process and the fact that it already existed in the rough in some of Ed Heinemann's earlier work. It was rushed into production and used to outfit several Navy and Marine squadrons following the war's end.

The invasion of South Korea in June 1950 saw the AD's rapid introduction into the air over the peninsula. ADs served admirably in both fighter and attack roles throughout the war and reputedly carried everything against the enemy except the kitchen sink until one even did that. Rausa details not only the experiences of many who flew the AD in Korea, but also the aircraft's continued development and evolution through various models.

With the redesignation of DoD aircraft in 1960, the AD received the more prominently known label, the A-1 Skyraider. Even before the name change, the "Able Dog" was introduced into another combat zone, both actual and potential. American pilots took ADs into Vietnam for use against the Viet Minh insurgents and several stayed to serve as instructors. As the Indochinese war heightened in the '60s, the A-1 continued to assume ever bigger roles in the fighting and flew throughout all of the Southeast Asia theater. Air Force Major Bernard Fisher gained the Medal of Honor for his A-1 exploits in the A Shau valley. The Skyraiders were critical to the successful team efforts in the helicopter recoveries of many downed airmen.

The author of *Skyraider* has written an excellent overview of the accomplishments of a durable combat airframe. To many it is only an airplane but Rausa echoes the sentiments of many who feel the A-1 possessed a life of its own. This story is well illustrated and chronicles an appreciation for a first class flying machine for those who flew it and those who have not.

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Kronenberg, Philip S. ed. *Planning U.S. Security*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1981. 214pp.

In 1980-81, the National Security Affairs Institute at the National Defense University sponsored a series of seminars which attempted