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MiG Master: The Story of the F-8 Crusader

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would be well worth reading. Unfortunately, he is unlikely to do so, in that he has frequently expressed his distaste for discussions of methodology. Nevertheless, because *Allies of a Kind* raises so many important questions, and because its conclusions are likely to provoke so many controversies, other scholars will, no doubt, rush to fill the gap.

MICHAEL K. DOYLE

Tillman, Barrett. *MiG Master: The Story of the F-8 Crusader*. Annapolis: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co., 1980. 224pp.

To many, a military airplane is only an expensive collection of metal, nuts and bolts. To others, it may bring to mind poignant memories of past experiences. To all, it should represent a valuable tool for deterrence and, if necessary, military action. Books about air weapon systems can approach the subject from each viewpoint but the latter serves the military professional best. When the story of an aircraft's development and performance is juxtaposed with its actual use, the result is greater than the individual parts. This story of the F-8 *Crusader* fills that bill.

Barrett Tillman, author of several books on World War II aircraft including the F4U *Corsair*, ventures into the jet age with this volume. Tracing the story from the early days of jet warfare in Korea, the author performs an excellent job in unfolding the *Crusader's* development into an operational fleet fighter. Where many aviation writers lose the reader on technical details, Tillman fleshes out the rest phase with numerous personal interviews and insights.

The early years of the F-8 witnessed its unsuccessful bid for the first level supersonic flight by the achievement of several world speed records. Marine Maj. John H. Glenn achieved a transcontinental speed record during Project

Bullet in the late sixties that still stands. The peacetime years of the fighter also saw its use in low-level reconnaissance missions over Cuba during the missile crisis. The author errs here by his scope of the photo recon missions. While Tillman presents Operation *Blue Moon* as solely an F-8 effort, the Air Force flew at least an equal number of low-level sorties across the island.

The F-8's true grit became apparent during the Vietnam air war. Three chapters cover the period in superb detail including a discussion of the airplane's armaments. The first narrative chapter, "The Vietnam Years," is much more than just an accounting of F-8 participation. It is a well-written coverage and analysis of the entire air conflict over North Vietnam. While Tillman's asides against national leaders of the period are occasionally volatile, this is one of the better postwar treatments of the 1965-1973 campaign. The followup chapter, "MiG Encounters," pits the *Crusader* against its arch enemy, the North Vietnamese MiG. Numerous actual air battles are capably described and placed in the context of the war around them. The F-8 was seemingly designed just for Southeast Asia and it served its purpose well.

This book is rounded out with a look at the international applications of the F-8 by France and the Philippines plus several excellent appendices. Those provided include aircraft specifications, Vietnam cruises by F-8 squadrons, MiG kills and an excellent glossary of aircraft and Vietnam era terminology. The book is also well illustrated and documented.

While *MiG Master* is, at face value, the mere story of an airplane, it is much more than that as it unravels the story of those who flew and fought in it. This work is one of the best thus far in the volumes written about the air war over Vietnam.

DON RIGHTMYER
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