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Launch The Intruders: A Naval Attack Squadron In The Vietnam War, 1972 (Modern War Studies (Paperback))



Synopsis

Each pilot and bombardier/navigator sat side by side in an all-weather jet built for low-level bombing runs, precision targeting, and night strikes. Their success—and their very lives—depended on teamwork in flying their versatile A-6 Intruders. And when the North Vietnamese mounted a major offensive in 1972, they answered the call. Carol Reardon chronicles the operations of Attack Squadron 75, the “Sunday Punchers,” and their high-risk bombing runs launched off the U.S.S. Saratoga during the famous LINEBACKER campaigns. Based on unparalleled access to crew members and their families, her book blends military and social history to offer a unique look at the air war in Southeast Asia, as well as a moving testament to the close-knit world of naval aviators. Theirs was one of the toughest jobs in the military: launching off the carrier in rough seas as well as calm, flying solo and in formation, dodging dense flak and surface-to-air missiles, delivering ordnance on target, and recovering aboard safely. Celebrating the men who climbed into the cockpits as well as those who kept them flying, Reardon takes readers inside the squadron’s ready room and onto the flight decks to await the call, “Launch the Intruders!” Readers share the adrenaline-pumping excitement of each mission as well as those heart-stopping moments when a downed aircraft brought home to all, in flight and on board, that every aspect of their lives was constantly shadowed by danger and potential death. More than a mere combat narrative, *Launch the Intruders* interweaves human drama with familial concerns, domestic politics, and international diplomacy. Fliers share personal feelings about killing strangers from a distance while navy wives tell what it’s like to feel like a stranger at home. And as the war rages on, headlines like Jane Fonda’s visit to Hanoi and the Paris Peace Accords are all viewed through the lens of this heavily tasked, hard-hitting attack squadron. A rousing tale of men and machines, of stoic determination in the face of daunting odds, Reardon’s tale shines a much-deserved light on group of men whose daring exploits richly deserve to be much better known.

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Customer Reviews

“One of the finest cockpit views of the air war over Vietnam ever written. Reardon tells us the whole story of the war—from the missions flown and bombs dropped to the plight of the enlisted bomb handler and the story of the wives left behind. Her sensitivity for detail and context makes this book soar far above your typical squadron history or pilot memoir.”—John Sherwood, author of *Afterburner: Naval Aviators and the Vietnam War* “A winner! This is one of the finest small unit histories to come out of Vietnam or any other war [and] a real contribution to the history of Naval aviation.”—John F. Guilmartin, Jr., author of *A Very Short War: The Mayaguez and the Battle of Koh Tang*

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I really liked this book. I served in VA-75 during the cruise that this book is about and from what I remember, this book is a pretty accurate account of what went on. I also learned some things that went on behind the scenes. I was surprised to see that I was mentioned in the book, because I was a maintenance technician and not an officer. The book is primarily about the officers and the missions that they flew.

I served as an air intelligence officer in Attack Squadron 75 (VA-75) from July 1968 to July 1970.

Though I made Mediterranean Sea deployments and not Vietnam War deployments with the squadron as part of USS Saratoga's air wing, I feel qualified to judge Professor Carol Reardon's "Launch the Intruders" an unqualified success at depicting life at sea with the Sunday Punchers during the rigors of the 1972 Linebacker campaigns. The late Captain Richard P. "Deke" Bordone, VA-75's executive officer and then skipper during my tenure in the squadron and commanding officer--or "CAG"--of Carrier Air Wing 3 (CVW-3) during the period covered by the book, was only one of several former squadron mates aboard for this 1972 deployment. Others, friends of mine then I know not where now, include Lieutenants Bob Chisholm, Mike Schuster, and Paul Wagner. The air intelligence officers during this deployment were former students of mine at the Armed Forces Air Intelligence Training Center, Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado, where I was an instructor while these fine friends served just as I knew they would and as Professor Reardon documented they did--during which time I wished I was again a Sunday Puncher. Bravo Zulu, Professor Reardon! Les Joslin is a retired U.S. Navy commander, former U.S. Forest Service officer, and former college and university instructor who lives and writes in Bend, Oregon.

I am almost finished with it. Great book, talk with someone that was there and he says its all true. I spent 10 years with the A-6 aircraft and three cruises on Yankee station working the flight deck most of the time. One cruise on the USS America and two on the USS Constellation. Also did three other cruises with the A-6. Reading this book seem real to me. I know a couple of names in the book. Any sailor that was in aviation will really enjoy the book.

Before digital was analog. Remember the Flight of the Intruder (Jake Grafton Novels)? The BN had to kick-start a balky computer. Everything the Intruder crews had reminds me of Beta software. They knew all-weather attack could destroy targets while reducing losses- it begged for the toughest assignments. However, equipment reliability frequently affected missions. You think a plane might launch in daylight if some lighting is inoperable, but these planes needed all their electronics to survive in enemy skies. On ship, the repair guys had increasing pressure and few repair parts, so daily availability rates were poor. This is the background to the war cruise of Navy Attack Squadron 75. Thank you, fellas. You have my respect.

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I was attached to an Intruder Squadron in Vietnam. Felt multiple emotions as I read this.

Excellent book

I served in the maintenance department a West Coast A-6 squadron that deployed for Vietnam in 1971. Reading this book reminded me of many long since forgotten details and events that were part of life aboard a carrier at war. I enjoyed the authors look at the squadron, the individuals, and their families, and the impact of family separation, politics, duty, honor, fatigue, and endless routine. I read many passages and thought "a different squadron, but mine really was not much different". Life in a flying squadron aboard a carrier (and any other ship) makes people close and losses are personal. Professor Reardon, while writing about one A-6 squadron, honors all the Navy's flying community.

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